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ABSTRACT

The need for two-year colleges to accommodate heterogeneous student bodies, including many underprepared and disadvantaged students, has resulted in the implementation of innovative teaching-learning approaches. In order to ascertain faculty attitudes toward innovative curriculum and instruction, 74 social science and English/foreign language instructors at five Florida community colleges were interviewed and asked to complete a questionnaire, one section of which required objective responses, and the other subjective, open-ended answers. About 75 percent of the respondents, in varying degrees, indicated that the rate of innovation in community college curricula should be reduced, at least for the immediate future. Many of the respondents pointed out that many innovative teaching formats have resulted in such phenomena as academic grade inflation, erosion of academic standards (including reduced student ability to write and, thus, to succeed in formal subjective or written examinations), and too little emphasis on cognitive learning. Respondents were not opposed to innovations per se, but felt that new formats should be required to prove themselves before their wholesale adoption. More uniform faculty and administrative policies are called for in order to prevent further erosion of academic standards. (NHM)

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Opinions of Selected Faculty Members on Curriculum and Instruction at Five South Florida Community Colleges

CHESTER HANDLEMAN

A MAJOR APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT
PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER

1. Introduction 1

Statement of Purpose 1

Statement of Major Issues and Research Questions 2

Sources of Information and Assistance 4

Implications and Significance 5

2. Background and Review of the Literature 6

3. Methodology or Procedure 49

4. Results and Analyses of the Ten Objective and the Six Subjective Open-Ended Responses 56

Statistical Analyses of the Ten Objective Responses 56

Presentation and Analyses of Data 59

Tables of Averaged Responses to the Ten Objective Statements for All Five Community College Campuses 92

Analyses of the Six Subjective, Open-Ended Questions for Five South Florida Community Colleges 95

5. Summary, Implications and Recommendations . . . 137

LIST OF FOOTNOTES 164

BIBLIOGRAPHY 172

APPENDICES

A. Tables of the Responses to the Ten Objective Statements to Part I for Five Community Colleges 177

PAGE

B. Twelve Contingency Tables of Responses to Objective Statements with Low Chi-Square Values ($p < .001$) 180

C. Representative Sampling of the Subjective Responses to the Six Open-Ended Questions of Part II of the Questionnaire 186

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In recent years, there has been much controversy concerning which teaching methods and curriculum formats are most valid for community college students. Many educators point out that since two-year institutions must accommodate heterogeneous student bodies, including many underprepared and disadvantaged students, radically new teaching-learning approaches are in order and should even be the norm--at least for standard and credit courses. Some faculty members prefer a more structured approach to teaching--even including the use of the so-called "learning objectives" concept. Others claim that underprepared and heterogeneous populations should be taught by means of unstructured formats; a more structured one, which might tend to "intimidate" students. Some insist on constant and radical innovation in the instructional and curriculum areas. Others argue that a more traditional methodology combined with a quite limited innovative approach is the optimum procedure. Of course, there are many intermediate viewpoints between these extremes.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Major Applied Research Project is to ascertain, by means of two questionnaires, one objective and one subjective in nature, just what a selected, random sample of faculty members in five South Florida Community Colleges believes are valid and invalid approaches in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

Statement of Major Issues and Research Questions

In recent years most American colleges have been trying out new ideas to improve their programs. Principles of egalitarianism have been increasingly outweighing those of selectivity and elitism.[1] Because of rising expectations, there has been a world-wide value shift with respect to education as indicated by the UNESCO report, Learning to Be.[2] This important work points out that "every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life," and that "education should be dispensed with and acquired through a multiplicity of means." It goes on to say that teaching, contrary to traditional ideas and practice, should adapt itself to the learner.[3]

Until the late 1960's, higher educational institutions in America went along with these positions. But then, for a variety of reasons, "public attitudes and support for higher education turned from position support to negative criticism."[4] Accountability and efficiency have now become important factors as well as change. Change for the sake of change, without regard to whether the proposed change will accomplish goals better than current practice, too often tends to be the norm. S. V. Martovana and Eileen Kuhns point out:

> It /change/ is unlikely to benefit either institutional survival or student learning, and is especially dangerous when the process of change takes the form of reaction to one crisis after another . . . . and the

> concomitant all too often is the introduction of random changes--if anything which shows promise of increasing enrollments or bringing in more resources or solving any other immediate difficulty.[5]

Both the popular media and scholarly journals have become more critical than ever of the drop in academic achievement of American students. This deterioration has been reported from the results of various scholastic aptitude tests given by such well-known testing organizations as the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the American College Testing Program (ACT). Both of these agencies report that achievement scores for entering college freshmen have dropped every year for the past ten years for a total of more than 15 percent. Similar results have been reported for those taking the Florida Twelfth Grade Achievement Tests. As a result, students coming to college are often not prepared to do college work. Indeed, as has variously been reported, perhaps a majority of community college students, who usually enter on an "open door" policy, are two or more years below "grade level" as they enter college.

Innovative teaching techniques have been ubiquitous in the public schools for more than a decade, and have long been employed in community colleges as well. Some critics are beginning to argue that these methods, whatever their form, may not be the panacea that their supporters have long claimed them to be. Obviously, there are many other factors for the present disappointing student achievement levels in the schools and in community colleges. Still, it is important to reconsider some of the optimistic promises which "change" was supposed to produce. Obviously, change and innovation are needed in the curriculum and in instruction. It is the degree of change on which there is so much disagreement. Topics to be considered in this study will include:

(a) Dealing with underprepared students.
(b) Programmed and individualized instruction.
(c) Testing characteristics and formats.
(d) The use of educational "hardware."
(e) Instructional accountability.
(f) Student evaluations of instructors.
(g) Academic grade inflation.
(h) Innovative programs in general.

Sources of Information and Assistance

A review of the literature concerning faculty members' views on curriculum and instruction in today's institutions of higher education not only showed understandable disagreement concerning good procedures in these areas, but also indicated a great deal of concern that what often posed as useful change was, in reality, a serious reduction in academic standards and questionable educational practice.

In order to ascertain just what faculty members at five South Florida Community Colleges believed concerning the problems of curriculum and instruction at that level, two questionnaires were devised (one subjective and one objective) and were later completed by a selected, random sample of instructors at these institutions. The results of these findings were examined, both by means of careful observable analysis and with the aid of the computer. These findings can be found in Chapter IV of this study as well as in the Appendices.

Implications and Significance

The implications and significance of a study such as this can be great. Much of the literature concerning the community college curriculum and instruction has pointed out the need for change. To a great extent, changes of many types have indeed occurred--often as a result of the writings of professional educators. Yet it is important to know to what extent the teachers at the community college level agree with many of the innovative procedures that have been demanded--from individualized instruction to the reduced importance of cognitive learning. If information of this sort can be given to critics who constantly demand more and more radical change, both groups can gain a better knowledge of which innovative techniques have or have not been working in the classroom and to what degree. Of course, critics have always blamed classroom teachers' failures to succeed with innovative ideas on the latter's faulty use of and bias towards some of the new methods. In spite of this problem, community college faculty members' opinions concerning curriculum and instruction could be of great interest and benefit to those concerned with education on that level.

CHAPTER II

Background and Review of the Literature

The question of what is and what is not valid with some of the newer teaching methods and curriculums in community colleges today has been disputed for a number of years and is unlikely to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction in the foreseeable future. Eugene F. Miller, in The Journal of Higher Education, speaks of the value of a disciplined, structured, college education, which he maintains has been weakened by student activism since the 1960's. He claims that this "has brought American education to a point of crisis without parallel in its long history."[6] David Reisman points out that many faculty members agree with the above statement, but he also claims that many of the younger ones are "bored by their own research in many cases, excited by the cultural revolution and eager to identify with what seems to be youthful and energetic; they read into the student movement support for their own ideals."[7] Statements such as these, by two eminent educators, are certainly critical of the student movement of the 1960's, which was a factor in bringing on the so-called student crisis of that period, the impact of which is still very much with us today. As will be noted below, while many of these results undoubtedly have been beneficial to higher education, still more may not have been.

K. Patricia Cross, well-known researcher in the community college field, writes significantly:

> The full meaning of universal post-secondary education has probably not been understood, and certainly not been accepted, by the majority of people whose life work is education. The most common position among faculty who consider themselves enlightened is that higher education should be open to all those able and willing to do the work in the manner and form in which it is now offered. A second position is taken by a growing minority to 'lower the standards' of academic education in order to get credentials in the hands of the disadvantaged so that they can obtain the material and social benefits of society.
>
> Neither position is adequate for these times . . . . The purpose of education is to maximize the potential of each person to live a fulfilled and constructive life. And to accomplish that end we need not lower standards. Quite the contrary, we should organize education around the premise that we must demand of each student the highest standards of performance in the utilization of his or her talents.[8]

Richard L. Barnett of the State University of New York at Albany, himself a young faculty member, said:

> . . . . the incessant demand for modification and for the abandonment of long established practice is a destructive force which may result in the irreparable deterioration of the traditional college system. The traditional institution has shown its value over the years and should be changed only moderately until concrete, superior alternatives have been demonstrated.[9]

No less an authority than Robert F. Goheen, for many years president of Princeton University, discussing education and the curriculum, maintains that "the old may sometimes be more deeply relevant than the new."[10]

The above arguments suggest that while change may be indicated with regard to some phases of teaching and the curriculum, change may also lead to a poorer as well as to a better situation concerning the educative process. In other words, change should not take place simply because a new approach to a learning situation seems as if it would be better than the present one. Nor should change be implemented in one community college simply because such change seems to have worked well in another. Many human and other factors in one situation where it worked might not be amenable to change in another.[11]

Many times an instructor "will make a mad dash for relevance, aiming for a teaching style that is more entertaining than it is informative," says Ronald Swartz. He claims that instructors have a responsibility "not to be flaccid and dry in their teaching"; however, they also have an obligation to see that "valuable time is not wasted and frivolously used." Swartz contends that the attempt to "make learning fun" can end up teaching students how to be irresponsible.[12] For Swartz, the fact that certain students are underprepared and largely unmotivated for academic work would not indicate that such weaknesses could be resolved to a significant degree by making learning fun. In his opinion, the instructor's ability to motivate such unwilling students is limited; most of the effort must be made by the student himself.

On the other hand, innovators in education like K. Patricia Cross are more willing than some of the above critics to accommodate underprepared and unwilling students. She explains that the American system of education is moving from the meritocratic era to one of egalitarianism.[13] Cross argues that access to higher education not suitable for the development of individual talents is of doubtful value, and that a society as complex as ours needs to encourage diversity in the curriculum. Such a society should not rely on what traditionally have been recognized as suitable academic standards of achievement. All students should not do the same thing at the same time, says Cross. She criticizes an educational system "which spends more attention correcting weaknesses of New Students than in developing their strengths."[14] For Cross, "new students" are defined as those students who score in the lowest third of academic ability. She points out:

> New Students are positively attracted to careers; they prefer to learn things that are tangible and useful. New Students prefer the vocational rather than the academic model that is so highly prized by the college faculty. New Students pick academic activities that will teach them how to make a good living.[15]

Some critics of traditional education ask for more field experience as a way of learning. Baker Brownell, for example, has criticized colleges for their failure to use the larger community as a resource for educating college students. He claims that higher education is "still treated not as life but as preparation for life," and that the cloistered campus is unreal--that the typical college student has few chances to test ideas against experience.[16]

Samuel Baskin, Director of Program Development and Research in Education at Antioch College, points to the research internship programs developed by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest as an encouraging development in innovative education. He also supports new developments such as the special calendar terms of Kalamazoo and Beloit colleges. These calendar terms require students to spend part of their college programs in some kind of off-campus experience.[17] Baskin supports such well-known innovative teaching techniques as independent study, team teaching, technology for instruction, institutional television, cartridge-loading films, computer technology, interdisciplinary studies, non-western studies, new classroom and library designs, residential hall instruction, experience abroad, field experience as a way of learning, student influence on the curriculum, research-oriented programs, calendar revision, and seminars for freshmen.[18] While most of these formats could have a beneficial influence on community college as well as four-year college curriculums, it is highly unlikely that a single college could benefit from implementing all of these programs. Some of these innovations might be more suited to residential colleges with selective admissions standards; others might be of benefit to the community college. But none will be helpful if they are not carefully tailored to the faculty, students, and administration as they exist at the individual college concerned.

While John Gardner has asked whether education can be equal and excellent, K. Patricia Cross asks whether it can be different and excellent. She claims that the time is past when a single type of institution can hope to serve the needs of the diverse population now seeking higher education. Cross says that it is probably wrong to believe that universities can provide the best type of education for "new students"; that this is a perpetuation of an elitist philosophy in an egalitarian era.[19] J. C. Stanley agrees, pointing out that not many colleges in the United States are highly selective. He claims that about 2,000 others of all types can accommodate most levels of ability and achievement.

The United States Commissioner of Education, Terell H. Bell, speaks out for the rather recent emphasis on learning or behavioral objectives in the curriculum, which he claims is essential if colleges and schools are to be held accountable for the outcome of their programs.[20] For Bell, teaching with the aid of behavioral objectives would help to prove that students are learning something which can be specifically measured. He believes that if proper objectives are established by the curriculum committee in cooperation with the instructor, there would be more likelihood that students who are graduated from secondary schools and are about to enter college would actually be prepared for college work. Those who support behavioral objectives and contingency management in the curriculum argue that these systems must be employed if the instructor is to be held accountable for the success (or failure) of his teaching.

Edward N. Hobson claims that accountability has important substantive effects on two very pressing current educational problems--student unrest and boredom. Says Hobson:

> Students want to know specifically what is expected of them. Such expectation can be met when the faculty member clearly states behavioral objectives for his course and shares them with the students. This is an essential ingredient of the requirement of accountability. Students in turn are then to be held accountable for the use of their time and energy. Giving them behavioral objectives and appropriate learning resources places specific responsibilities upon them. This should have impact upon the problem of student unrest.[21]

On the other hand, Ron W. Shearon and Robert G. Templin are not quite so sanguine about the benefits of learning objectives as are Bell and Hobson. They support this system to a degree, admitting that well-designed and innovative programs of behavioral objectives are a valuable factor in the learning process because:

> they increase instructional efficiency and effectiveness, facilitate learning, and organize the instructional plan into a meaningful whole so that the outcomes can be measured and assessed.[22]

But these authors explain that there are many critics of the behavioral objectives concept who claim that it has not demonstrated any increased efficiency or effectiveness in learning. Shearon and Templin admit that in many respects they agree with these critics. Such opponents of the system prefer the humanistic approach in teaching, claiming that the behavioral objectives approach to education is one that "trains" rather than "educates." Such arguments maintain that complex human behavior cannot be reduced to mechanistic measurements without dehumanizing the learning process.[23] Shearon and Templin cite research sponsored by the American Educational Research Association indicating there is little support for either side of the debate to show that behavioral objectives do or do not facilitate learning.[24] In spite of this finding, Shearon and Templin support the behavioral objectives concept to the extent that the learner's motivation toward and commitment to the attainment of those objectives are secure. These must be secured not just with regard to the acceptance of those objectives alone, "but also in the selection and design of learning experiences to meet those objectives."[25]

The above comments on behavioral objectives generally support them as a teaching tool. Yet there are many problems the instructor must face when he attempts to employ them properly. Behavioral objectives concepts may include specific measurement techniques which are not usually so evident in more conventional teaching formats. Yet for some good instructors the rather complicated format of setting up formal behavioral objectives may not be suited to their teaching strengths.[26]

In spite of certain limitations, the behavioral objectives format can serve a useful purpose if it is not too rigidly formulated. But there are many powerful arguments against it. While Arthur M. Cohen's well-known book Dateline 79 (1969), and John Roueche's and John Pitman's A Modest Proposal: Students Can Learn (1972) strongly support the concept of behavioral objectives, John Huther of the University of North Carolina just as strongly opposes their use.[27] Huther sharply disagrees with the Cohen and the Roueche-Pitman studies. Huther claims that there is much doubt about how well any set of objectives covers a given body of knowledge. Says Huther:

> Furthermore, the process of confronting students daily with specified objectives invites questioning. Will such objectives continue to be acceptable over an extended period of time?[28]
>
> The disturbing feature of such an approach to evaluation is that the learning which is guaranteed as a result of it becomes unassailable. For example, evidence cited to prove that learning has occurred might be that 90 percent in an English class received "A" grades. Such evidence is impressive but its weakness is that it is self-validating. Any outside audit of the learning that has occurred is irrelevant by definition if it attempts to assess any thing other than what has been specified in the objectives.[29]

The bitter battle over the advantages and disadvantages of such issues as behavioral objectives and accountability in the teaching process will undoubtedly continue to be fought for some time to come. It goes without saying that change in both college teaching and curriculum is in order and has been for some time. The important question, of course, is to ascertain how much change is proper, and in what areas of the educational process this innovation should take place. As already noted, the vast numbers of "new students" who have inundated community colleges in recent years have called for major changes. Yet opposing camps are still in sharp disagreement as to what constitutes reasonable and valid change, and what is change which merely leads to lower standards and less accountability. Cross and Baskin, above, make strong arguments for rather radical changes, while Miller and Barnett are quite skeptical of many changes which are already in operation. As noted above, much change that has occurred is valid and useful; certain accommodations for the "new," "disadvantaged," "underprepared," and "low-achieving" student are proper and useful. It is over the manner and degree of change that the battle is being fought.

Perhaps one of the severest critics of reform in higher education is John Manning, Professor of Humanities at Michigan State University. He maintains that reform in education, as in everything else, has its limits of tolerance. Manning says:

> Students are invited to design their own courses, grade their own work, and slosh around in administration. Formal grades and vigorous examinations are abandoned . . . . all of which are driving some of the more serious minded to retire to their academic specialties in disgust. Many verbal young students, of course, are delighted, and prefer to be graded on their un-thought out opinions on the latest films, pornography, sexual mores, homosexuality of premarital sex, the urban crisis and the Establishment, or to rationalize violence and self-indulgence.[30]

Manning goes on to admit that individual choice should be respected--even when wrong. But he maintains that "the only fundamental authority emanates from knowledge, disciplined and creative imagination, logical scholarship, and uncontaminated evidence." Manning looks back fondly to the time when professors were assumed to know more than undergraduates; when it was believed that"this inequity could be corrected by a disciplined course of instruction."[31]

Critics such as Manning, as well as several others mentioned above, are quite disturbed with some of the change that is taking place in higher education. All the arguments of K. Patricia Cross and Samuel Baskin to the contrary, apparently have little effect on these conservatives. While the Carnegie Commission and Newman reports on education call for certain fundamental change in higher education, albeit not so drastic as some plans, many conservatives and even some moderates are quite unhappy with much of the change that has already taken place.

Some educators claim that certain students learn best by watching televised programs, others by participating in group discussions, and still others by listening to well-presented lectures. These critics claim that because of such individual student differences, there should be alternate classes of the same subject, each taught by a different medium. Therefore, a student who prefers group discussion should not be required to take courses given by the lecture or television format. Likewise, those who prefer to take objective-type examinations only should not be required to write out answers in examination books. But Paul Dressel of Michigan State University sharply disagrees with this position. This well-known expert in the field of evaluation claims that all students, regardless of preference, should have practice in taking good notes during lectures.[32] They should also be required to gain experience in writing out subjective-type answers to examination questions. Dressel claims that if these experiences are not included, students will not really be educated for today's world.[33]

K. Patricia Cross, the well-known advocate of change in education, claims that it is essential to permit wide individual variation in choice of subject, since this is a more humane and realistic approach.[34] Once students get out of school, she explains, they choose the areas in which they display competencies. Only in school are students required to display their weaknesses; "human dignity demands the right to be good at something," says Cross, who quotes John Gardner: "'An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher.'"[35] Cross explains that "new students" have learned in school that giving the wrong answers is painful. She, therefore, favors the "guaranteed success" programs which Cohen and Roueche, above, favor--a part of the learning objectives format. She maintains that this program is sound because it involves starting the student where he is; as he gains confidence, he is gradually moved to more difficult tasks. In this way he gains a reward by doing something which he thought he might not be able to do. In this type of learning format, says Cross, comparison with fellow students becomes irrelevant, since the student simply seeks the development of his own competencies.[36]

While there undoubtedly is a need for using new teaching methods to accommodate new and non-traditional students, the question of how to properly account for academic standards under the new curriculum and teaching methods remains difficult to resolve. Writers such as John Roueche and Terry O'Banion apparently are not very much concerned with academic standards and accountability as these terms have traditionally been understood. Indeed, O'Banion claims that the curriculum for non-traditional students should be built around the areas in which such students have already shown aptitude. He would even do away with the use of diagnostic tests, since they indicate to students their weaknesses (a negative factor) as well as their strengths.[37]

It is very clear from the above discussion that there is a definite need to have more information on what areas of innovative programs are useful and which should be discarded. As noted above, no definitive answers can be reached which would satisfy the entire academic community. Yet the more documentary evidence available, the better; indeed, much hard information must be obtained before answers to this question can be forthcoming. One's philosophy of education will guide one in this area as much as factual information. Nevertheless, the latter is still valuable in shedding light on the validity of changes occurring in higher education.

It is disquieting to read that after five years of "the most flexible and progressive undergraduate curriculum to be found in any major American university today," the program at Brown University is now struggling for survival against heavy odds and criticism.[38] Reporter Robert Reinhold explains Brown's difficulty with its innovative curriculum by quoting Brown University student body president John Carusone:

> I represent the mainstream of student sentiment in seeking career goals and moving away from intellectual finger painting. A lot of illusions have been shattered--there has been a resurgence of realism. People realize that the world is a competitive place.[39]

U. S. News and World Report reports disillusionment with some of the innovative programs that only a decade ago promised to bring success to the public school and college classrooms.[40] Most experimental courses, sometimes called "finger painting" courses by cynical undergraduates, are reported to be not nearly so popular as a few years ago. Some of these, critics say, were "bull sessions" with no specific intellectual merit.[41] The same popular journal reports in another article that today, educators around the country are taking a fresh and often disillusioned look at "new math" and other innovations that were supposed to revolutionize classroom learning during the last fifteen years.[42] Says U. S. News:

> In many cities now expensive teaching machines gather dust in storerooms because both students and teachers are bored with them--or because there is no longer anyone around to operate and repair them. All but 10 of 30 regional education laboratories that the federal government established for testing such new techniques have been closed in the last few years.[43]

Yet not all that has been introduced into the curriculum in recent years should be discarded; indeed, some of it is quite useful. Mortimer Smith, Executive Director of the Council for Basic Education, which is hardly an organization standing for great amounts of innovative instruction admits:

> 'Back to the basics' or 'up the three R's' are comforting but simplistic battle cries. My hope is that we will borrow the best of both worlds and end up challenging and instructing students without stifling or confusing them.[44]

Many critics of the more liberal persuasion claim that the acquisition of cognitive information is not a major purpose of higher education. More importantly, as has been pointed out for decades on the public school level, are the attitudes, interests, skills and interpersonal relationships which students may receive from their educational experience. Many critics who take this position maintain that the student would be better served if less emphasis were placed on the "basics" (reading, writing, mathematics, and study skills) and more were put on teaching techniques which attract students to the learning situation. The more varied the learning experience, according to this argument, the better it is for the student--especially for the underprepared student.

Baskin indicates that a single college course of one semester could employ the following teaching approaches: independent studies, team teaching, "field" experience, new instructional spaces, seminar instructional television, computer technology, films, learning center, teleculture, interdisciplinary approaches--and even others.[45] This varied approach may attract many students, particularly the disinterested or underprepared community college student. But it should be remembered that most community college classes meet only 150 minutes per week. It appears almost physically impossible to accomplish all of these media changes and techniques during the relatively few instructor-student contact hours available and still manage to cover sufficient substantive material--if that too were an objective.

Yet John Roueche is perhaps correct when he points out that a curriculum dictated by tradition makes little sense to the "new students." He refers to a recent session with minority students and English faculty members at one community college when the question was asked:

> Who decided that all students should be required to learn only that literature written on a small group of islands off the coast of Western Europe? Why do we always start each literature course with this fellow Beowulf? Has anyone in England written anything since 1900? Do you honestly expect us to like this stuff? It has no meaning in our world.[46]

Roueche points out that non-traditional students need to see why they are required to learn a particular subject. They seek higher education because they are looking for particular jobs, which will produce higher incomes and the benefits of a better life. He also claims that grading policies and practices should be non-punitive in order that such students can gain a feeling of success which they may have lacked previously. Rather than lowering standards, Roueche argues that this plan would give such students as much time as is necessary to accomplish the required learning tasks.[47]

Roueche claims that the use of "learning packages" is helpful, especially for the underprepared and disinterested student. These packages, he explains, include a variety of media, ranging from programmed materials and coordinated presentations to using slides, audio tapes, and simulation models and games. The argument goes that since different students learn in different ways, varied teaching-learning strategies should be available for student selection. This strategy should be effective in keeping students in schools and colleges positively motivated.[48]

Many of the above suggestions by Roueche are undoubtedly commendable in some respects. It is possible that some of these approaches might help the unmotivated or underprepared student. Indeed, there are numerous investigations that appear to indicate beneficial results from instructional methods such as Roueche's. On the other hand, recent evidence points out that many of these innovative ideas, which take competition out of learning and achievement, and which sometimes stress innovation and accommodation at the expense of cognitive information, have not brought the happy results which their optimistic advocates expected. Dr. Kenneth Clark, the respected black social psychologist, who has been active in the civil rights movement, is scathing in his appraisal of what has happened to our schools over the past decade.[49] Says Clark:

> Without apology I would say that I am a traditionalist . . . . Any theory that a student shouldn't be pressured, that he shouldn't be frustrated, imposes on the child the most horrible form of self-deception.[50]

The above quotation hardly agrees with Roueche's arguments that students should not be subject to punitive grading or that they should be allowed to study at their own (often leisurely) pace. Clark goes on to say: "Under the guise of protecting and not frustrating the student, educators use double-talk and alibis to hide the fact that many teachers simply don't teach."[51]

Miami Herald columnist Martin L. Gross, who often writes on educational subjects, is especially critical of the use of so-called teaching machines.[52] He claims that this type of "hardware" has been in use in many classrooms for over a decade, with generally disappointing results. Such modern learning techniques, says Gross, were supposed to revolutionize education and make the old-fashioned methods--and teacher--look awkward by comparison. Gross refers to a study made by Dr. Philip D. Smith (among others) of the Learning Research Center of West Chester State College (Pa.), coordinator of a project to study the effectiveness of foreign language laboratory systems in Pennsylvania schools. The results of this and other studies have been most disappointing.[53]

Still other modern teaching techniques which promised so much no longer look so promising, according to Dr. Fred T. Wilhelms, Executive Secretary of the National Association of Secondary Principals. He decries the general failure of the concept of "team teaching," once claimed to be the acme of modern educational methodology.[54] Gross refers to these disappointments and places some of the blame on America's too optimistic reliance on "systems," even in areas where method may be less important than a dedicated instructor.[55]

Yet the above criticisms of some of the innovative teaching techniques of recent years should not be an indictment of other successful experiments which are now being developed in the schools and colleges. Cooperative and work-study programs, while not exactly new, are widely accepted as the best tools for career education; but their spread is blocked by child labor laws and scarcity of jobs and union contracts. The community colleges can do a still better job in preparing young people for jobs by giving them better and more realistic guidance. These colleges in particular have been offering workers a change in mid-career so that they are not condemned for life to a bad job.[56]

Writing in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Allen Lacy points out significantly that of all the "new" or "innovative" undergraduate colleges that were established in the 1960's, such as Hampshire, New College, Kirkland, Eisenhower, Stockton State, and others, none have fully realized the utopian hopes of their founders. All, says Lacy, "were conceived in optimism and born with the high hopes that they would become laboratories of innovation and creativity for the rest of higher education." Lacy, formerly at Kirkland and presently at innovative Stockton State, says sadly:

> The new colleges have not only failed to reform American higher education by their example; they have also tended swiftly to disappoint the high hopes of their founders . . . . Those who come to new colleges expect that the rhetoric will be true, that the goals and ideas proclaimed in the catalog will be descriptions of what actually goes on, that "Erewhon" will in fact be relevant, interdisciplinary, student-centered, communitarian, innovative, or what-have-you: before long faculty members and students begin to express their doubts.[57]

An editorial in The Chapel Hill Newspaper (N. C.) points out that it is ridiculously easy these days to graduate from high school, and from some colleges, "without doing anything more than brushing lightly against education." It blames educators for their specious arguments that "flunking those who fail to learn will scar students psychologically by telling them they have failed." It also criticizes college faculty members who argue that it is not their responsibility to teach students to read and write. While the editorial does not blame colleges for the latter problem, it severely criticizes them "for enrolling semi-illiterates and graduating them, willy nilly, just as the high schools do."[58]

Falling academic standards, as indicated above, are more and more becoming a matter of real concern of responsible public officials and the public alike. Chancellor Robert Mautz of Florida's university system has recently told the

State Board of Regents that "C" could no longer be considered the "benchmark" because professors in the state's universities are handing out too many A's and B's.[59] Mautz' report explains that in Florida's universities more than 50 percent of the students are getting A's and B's; and that at the state's largest institution, the University of Florida with 24,000 students, about 60 percent of the students are in this category. Mautz says that such academic grade inflation:

> misleads parents into thinking that their children are doing better work than they are. The grading system is no longer meaningful. Obviously not 60 percent of our students are above average.[60]

In agreement with Mautz is Florida Regent Marshall Criser, saying that in his opinion "A B-plus now indicates an average student." He points out that "students, parents and faculty are ill-served by this kind of soft grading and soft thinking." The Mautz report indicates that other factors tend to contradict any justification for a continuing trend toward higher grades. It explains that while grades have gone up, students' performances on most state and national standardized tests, such as the Florida Twelfth Grade Test and the Educational Testing Service examinations, noted above, have continued to go down. The Report blames the "soft grading" on a concept of no-failure--meaning that students are passed through the educational system despite the fact that they may do failure work.

The Chancellor's report also blames the problem on student evaluations of their professors, explaining that some instructors are afraid to give tough grades because of the evaluations which students might give them at the end of the course. After giving several other reasons for easy grading, Mautz says that he plans to try to get the state's professors to start using more C's in their grading, although he admits that professors have the right to grade as they please.[62]

The above examples may be some of the reasons why so-called "quality education" is being threatened. While it is true that grades in themselves are not the criterion for good education, inflated grading, which does not in any way reflect the real achievement of college students, is a factor which can threaten academic standards and the quality of higher education.

The past decade has been one of constantly changing and highly innovative curriculum and instructional formats which are being employed in literally hundreds of community colleges throughout the United States. Yet it is somewhat discouraging to read almost daily in the popular media, and in some of the scholarly journals as well, that many innovations are apparently not producing what some of their zealous supporters had promised. Innovations as such may not be the true culprit; new teaching techniques and curriculums sometimes are necessary to accommodate changing conditions and life-styles. Disappointing results sometimes appear to have occurred because radical and unproved programs may have been introduced too often and in wholesale measure. For more than two decades, indeed, the public schools have been experimenting with certain innovative teaching techniques which may have neglected the basics in order to interest and accommodate the "new student." The colleges are now inheriting the effects of some of these teaching innovations, and it has been reported that many thousands of semi-literate students have been inundating the two-year and even some four-year institutions. Apologists for some innovative programs blame much of the problem on the fact that public school and college instructors have often not applied the new methods properly. However, enough time has now passed to allow for an assessment of some of these programs. It is, of course, true that some of them have been successful (the limited and judicious use of audio-visual materials, some individualized instructional formats, etc.) and are continuing to contribute to the instructional process. The best of the newer curriculums and instructional formats should be retained. Yet the time is already overdue for a reconsideration as to which curriculums and instructional methods pretend to offer academic challenge but really do not. One of these, as already noted, is the almost exclusive use of objective-type testing at the expense of subjective or "written-comprehensive" examinations.

An article appearing in the Fort Lauderdale News reports that publishers of college textbooks are increasingly resorting to simplified language in their books "to adjust to a new element in higher education--the college student who cannot read at traditional college levels."[63] The article continues:

> Although most of the pressure for simplified textbooks comes from community colleges, the established four-year colleges are also giving signs that today's student, raised on television, movies and what one educator called "the anti-language assumptions of our culture" are having trouble with the English language when they get to college.[64]

It is true, of course, that hundreds of thousands of students now in college, especially in community colleges, would not have been there twenty years ago because of their limited academic abilities and their disadvantaged economic position. Yet in an effort to accommodate the underprepared and disadvantaged student, it may be that standards have been unduly lowered at many institutions of higher education; that students are being "passed" when they have achieved relatively little in their studies. The concept that a student must gain a feeling of success to achieve even more may be valid from a psychological viewpoint. But a passing grade should not be given merely to confirm this dictum.

Terrel H. Bell, the United States Commissioner of Education, asks for more programs in career education to conform with potential job openings, but at the same time criticizes colleges which do not teach students correct English and substantive material.[65] Bell says:

> As ideas proliferate, as facts multiply, it is more important than ever that a young man or woman know how to write about them easily and understandably.[66]

Bell particularly stresses that the need today is to learn salable skills. He also points out that students should learn to develop values and to conform to high academic standards.

Robert A. Goldwin, a special consultant to President Ford, takes a somewhat different position from Bell, although he too admits that colleges should train students in salable skills. Goldwin, however, questions the over-emphasis on salable skills, pointing out:

> A school that devotes itself totally and unquestionably to salable skills, especially in a time of high unemployment, sending young men and women into the world armed only with a narrow range of skills, is sending lambs into the lion's den. Too many people learn only one narrowly defined set of skills in school, trained to fill a position in one well-defined industry. And then that industry stops hiring or lays workers off.[67]

Goldwin claims that there is more to living than earning a living, and he maintains that the skills of analyzing, experimenting, discussing, reading, and writing must be developed. These are the ones that are always in demand--"the skills of a mind trained to think, to imagine and to express itself."[68]

While the above two experts differ somewhat in their emphasis on salable skills and on liberal education, both admit that salable skills, sound learning, and a trained mind are still the important ingredients which a college education should offer students today, as in previous years.

The Chronicle of Higher Education, hardly a conservative newspaper, in recent months has been reporting repeatedly on the falling achievement scores of newly admitted first-year college students. Says The Chronicle:

> The number of high school seniors scoring at high levels on the Scholastic Aptitude Test has dropped dramatically since the mid-1960's, data from the College Entrance Examination Board indicates.
>
> Between 1967 and 1974, the number of high school juniors and seniors scoring above 700 on the verbal S.A.T. test fell by half--down from appriximately 32,000 to 16,000. The number of students scoring above 600 fell by a third.[69]

The present lower absolute number of high achievers on college entrance examinations is even more alarming than the figures themselves indicate, since there are more people taking them (at all levels of ability). Yet only half as many reach the 700-plus achievement level as eight years ago, and only two thirds as many now reach the 600-plus level compared with 1967.

The Chronicle, in another article, continues to sound the alarm when it points out that college students today are using the English language at a lower level of proficiency than ever before in the history of American education.

Says The Chronicle:

> The complaints have come not only from institutions enrolling 'nontraditional' students but also from pretigious private campuses where, faculty members say, many students lack the skills needed to complete course assignments.[70]

The Chronicle reports that an institution as prestigious as the University of California at Berkeley has 1,165 of its freshmen, 45 percent of the entering class, taking remedial work in English. This program advises high schools to reinstate an advanced composition course for all students in the 11th grade who plan to go to college.[71] This report, and literally [illegible]ds of others throughout the nation, indicate that too [illegible] public school and college students are simply "passing through" their institutions without learning at acceptable levels, especially in the areas of subject matter, writing skills, and reasoning ability. Explanations for this serious state of affairs are so numerous that it is difficult to sort out the valid from the invalid. Some educators argue that still more innovative teaching methods are called for in spite of the fact that the world of education today seems to be inundated with "new approaches" to instruction and the curriculum. More conservative critics attribute part of the problem to too much innovation, claiming that not nearly enough emphasis is being placed on the basics at the public school level, the result being the greatly reduced achievement scores, noted above. To argue that critics have always decried weaknesses in student achievement levels does not help to explain or resolve the problem. Indeed, most reports on the subject in recent months indicate that students (including community college students) are "achieving" at lower levels than in previous years.

The Fort Lauderdale News brings the problem closer to home when it captions an article "Flunking College Getting Harder - Regents." The Florida Board of Regents reports that it is now harder to "flunk out" of a Florida state university than it used to be and states that the number of "C" grades has declined in recent years at the nine state universities; at the same time the percentage of A's and B's given has much increased. Says the report:

> There is no evidence that the ability level of Florida students enrolling in the state university system is rising. The inference that high grades can be attributed to higher ability levels of students is not supported by the averages shown (in the report).
>
> At the University of West Florida, D and F grades went from 10 percent in 1969 to 4 percent in 1973.[72]

Florida Regents Board member Marshall Harris claims that one reason for grade inflation is that some administrators examine instructors' performance ratings when reviewing faculty contracts; many teachers not on tenure are hesitant to give low grades. Another reason, says Marshall, is that colleges try to retain on their rosters as many students as possible to receive the most funding. Still another reason for the higher grading of students (in spite of lower test scores on achievement tests) is that, for many faculty members today, grades do not mean as much as they previously did.[73]

In the present period of economic recession it is important that academic grade inflation, lowered academic standards, and waste of any kind in the public sector be seriously examined. With administrators complaining that a "cap" may have to be put on community college enrollments because of reduced funding from state legislatures, it is now more important than ever that students who make little effort to attend classes or to achieve in their studies be told they will no longer be allowed to waste the taxpayers' money. While the community college has rightfully been established to serve its community, this fact does not necessarily require that the college vigorously recruit disinterested students. Of course, every reasonable effort should be made to help and encourage underprepared and disadvantaged students to achieve. However, a college should demand in return that its students make at least moderate efforts to attend classes and to succeed in them. An instructor can "innovate" in the classroom and accommodate the interests of students only to a certain degree--beyond that he is simply fooling himself and his students. While individual differences are "the name of the game" in the community college classroom, students' unwillingness to make a reasonable effort within their own capabilities cannot be placed under the umbrella of "accommodating the underprepared student."

The Broward Community College Phoenix, the student weekly newspaper, interviewed a number of instructors at Broward Community College (hereafter referred to as B.C.C.), asking their opinions of the preparation that B.C.C. students had received in the public schools. The responses generally were quite unfavorable.[74] Donna Wilkinson, head of the B.C.C. English Department, pointed out that over a third of the students had come from high school totally unprepared in the basics of English. The general consensus among the teachers interviewed was that this is a growing problem. The responses from many other instructors were that more and more students cannot read, write, or spell at anywhere near acceptable levels. One instructor termed these students as "the product of an inadequate educational system."[75] One student, when questioned whether the students were getting the basics in their pre-college education, said that he did not believe so. He responded: "We didn't learn any grammar or spelling or any of those things in high school. The teachers just assumed that we'd already had them." Another B.C.C. student commented that his parents "had a more basic education than we did; teachers don't teach the same things they used to."[76]

So much is being said in the press and elsewhere concerning the weaknesses of present day basic education--

the use of open classrooms, of unstructured classroom procedures, of student reading and writing deficiencies--that it makes serious people wonder if perhaps American education has gone too far in its efforts to accommodate disinterested, disadvantaged, and underprepared students at the expense of basic education. While it is undoubtedly true that certain innovative teaching and curriculum approaches should be used to take advantage of recent advances in educational research and "hardware" of many types, these advances should perhaps supplement rather than supplant the more traditional methods.

On the other hand, K. Patricia Cross' chapter "New Forms for New Functions," questions the traditional concept of academic standards in higher education.[77] She claims that "the task of conveying information in the academic disciplines is becoming untenable as a teaching function because of the knowledge explosion." Yet even though it may be true, as she claims, that "in every forty minutes enough new information is generated to fill a twenty-four volume encyclopedia," this fact should not cause the discard of some of higher education's long standing aims--of teaching students a certain body of knowledge, along with skills, attitudes, interests and the like. The argument that it is not necessary to remember information because "you can always look it up" is as invalid today as it ever was.

Cross' major argument, which may have some validity, is that the academic disciplines form too narrow a base upon which to build a society. She argues that academic success is not highly related to success in life outside of academe, and claims that "we have overemphasized the importance of that narrow range of human abilities that enable people to perform tasks in the school system."[78] Says Cross:

> Human abilities tend to be modestly related; a relationship exists between high school grades and leadership position. This modest correlation, however, may be attributed more to the success experiences and the resultant self-confidence of the good student than it may be to any innate relationship between academic and social abilities.[79]

While Cross undoubtedly is correct when she states that higher education does not involve itself with all or even most of the human skills and abilities, it is perhaps unfair to criticize institutions of higher education for this failure. While the nation and the world need many of these human skills and abilities, it is probably doubtful that most of them can best be developed in colleges or even in post-secondary institutions of any type. It is possible that America, in its effort to make higher education available to everyone, is trying to force it on those who would be better served in apprenticeship or other types of programs.

Cross points out that "new students" (those in the lowest third academically) demand that traditional education must be redesigned for the "egalitarian era."[80] She says:

> They /students7 drop out of our traditional schools; they quit listening to lectures; they fail to put forth their best effort; they score low on conventional tests designed to reflect the heart of the traditional academic curriculum; they get low marks for their school performance; their interests, leisure-time activities, and hobbies are "nonacademic"; they fail to develop self-confidence, and they tell us that they are nervous and tense in class.[81]

To counteract the above situation, Cross desires to make new educational programs to fit "new students" rather than to continue to use some of the more traditional instructional formats. She points out that "new students" are positively attracted to careers and prefer to learn things that are tangible and useful. They prefer a vocational model that will teach them what they need to know to make a good living. She maintains that as much money per student should be spent on "new students" in community colleges as on more traditional students in universities. This approach would make certain that "different" would be equated with "best" and not "least." Only by offering people the chance to succeed in different ways, says Cross, "will we ever achieve dignity and respect for all."[82]

Cross' arguments have merit if they are employed properly. On the other hand, they can also have a deleterious effect on what has usually been recognized as quality education. Few people would deny so-called "new students" the right to a good post-secondary education. Yet if it is true that many "new students" (and others as well) show little interest in academic education, as Cross indicates, these students should not be badgered and enticed into following such programs.

While there is much that is valuable in Cross' position, she may not be entirely correct. She says that students who do not achieve in standard academic pursuits should be evaluated for their abilities and skills in other areas; they should not be graded down since they have not achieved in academics.[83] Her position is that a whole new generation of disadvantaged people will emerge if these students receive low grades. She opts for broader and more varied curricula so that everyone's abilities may be judged in the areas in which they are most successful.[84] The community college, of course, has followed this position in general and now offers training and studies in a myriad of both career-oriented and transfer programs. This development is commendable. Yet it is doubtful whether the student would be well served if academic courses and standards were reduced below their present stance simply to accommodate non-academically inclined students who would like to receive high grades in these areas as well as in their career-oriented ones. Cross, of course, denies that lowered standards would necessarily occur; yet it is difficult for an unbiased observer to be convinced of this fact. Certainly there is enough room for all types of occupational skills and abilities in a country as large as the United States. A successful plumber or owner of a plumbing business usually has more status in the community and earns more money than an unsuccessful lawyer, for example. Each person should be allowed to follow the training or academic program which best suits his inclinations and aptitudes. Yet to reduce standards in community college academic programs so that "career oriented" students may succeed in a required course such as English composition or social science (as often occurs today) is hardly the best answer to the problem.

Cross would like to develop the kind of learning society in which "the able academician but poor mechanic exchanges tutoring services with the slow reader but good mechanic."[85] This plan, she argues, would allow each to teach in his own area of excellence and learn in his area of proposed competence. It would allow for equal opportunity to mean more than "the chance to develop competence in the area of someone else's strength."[86] This idea is commendable in theory; yet there is some question concerning the practicality of this format. Many students who have outside jobs might not be interested in "tutoring" other students, regardless of the possible benefits that might accrue from such activities.

The well-known black columnist, William Raspberry, of the Washington Post, writes about "The Decline and Fall of the College Degree."[87] He claims that we are torn between two equally appealing but mutually exclusive notions. The first is that college is a reasonable means of training a leadership cadre. The second is a rejection of anything that smacks of elitism. Says Raspberry:

> Sooner or later we're going to have to face up to the fact that equality of opportunity and inequality of results are not necessarily incompatible.
>
> When we do, maybe we will be willing to open the entry door to college wide enough to give everyone a chance to try and at the same time to keep the exit door small enough so that the whole thing is worth the effort.[88]

The above statement by a black and liberal journalist is somewhat surprising. However, other black liberals such as educator Kenneth Clark, the respected social psychologist, appear to take the same position. Both men suggest that underprepared black and other students should not be given good grades simply because they happen to be underprepared or disadvantaged. Says Clark, in a scathing appraisal of what has happened to the schools over the past decade:

> I would say I am a traditionalist. I do not see any substitute for the public schools teaching reading, writing, and arithematic as the base upon which all forms of education must rest. I don't believe a child can play any constructive role in this society if he is unable to read or if he does not have an elementary sense of grammatical structure. Children who have not mastered basic skills, are always aware of and humiliated by that fact. Any theory that a child shouldn't be pressured, that he shouldn't be frustrated imposes on the child the most horrible form of self depreciation . . . . The essential ingredient in teaching children is to respect the child by insisting that he does learn.[89]

The above two black writers appear almost too conservative in their outlook. Yet there is a great deal of value in what they say. To put credentials in the hands of the disadvantaged or disinterested who have not earned them will only reduce the college degree's value for others, who come by these degrees through serious effort. According to Jesuit Paul Reinert, president of St. Louis University, "the businessmen representing local companies have been screaming bloody murder that their young prospects can't spell, can't add, can't express themselves orally or in writing."[90] The continued overuse of "multiple choice" and other types of objective testing formats in the classroom will hardly help to alleviate this serious problem. While it is undoubtedly true that the community college instructor with large classes should not be required to give written or "blue book" tests all the time, perhaps a third of his examinations should be of a written format. The English composition instructors cannot solve the students' writing problems alone; they need help from the entire faculty in this task.

Franklin Patterson of the University of Massachusetts at a recent conference told the directors of university computer services and other administrators in higher education that the printed book is still the most important and influential piece of technology in education.[91] Patterson claims that "it is more portable, less destructable, and more adaptable to any condition than any competitive device." He also points out that "it requires no support system, such as electricity and is universally accepted."[92] His major point is that although there has been much innovation recently in educational hardware, "there have been few significant, widely adopted innovations in the essential processes of learning." He claims that most of these have been in the social organization of education and in a trend toward individualizing learning situations.[93] Patterson's position is valid, although he would probably be quick to admit that the computer and educational technology in general have had a useful and sometimes important impact on the curriculum and on instruction. Yet we should employ these tools only in ways which will benefit the student; they should not be overused so as to prevent students from receiving training in writing examinations and papers of all types. Technology can be employed to relieve some of the burden of the routine tasks which teachers traditionally have had to perform. Yet this does not mean that they should be allowed to completely excuse instructors from grading students' written work. It is no secret, for example, that in many community colleges the majority of instructors use objective testing formats exclusively.

Vermont Royster, retired editor of the Wall Street Journal, and at present teaching at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, writes about "The New Illiteracy."[94]

He refers to an article in the New York Times which says that textbook publishers are constantly receiving word from the nation's colleges that large numbers of college students simply cannot read English well enough to "understand textbooks previously used and understood by generations of students." The publishers, as a result, are lowering the level of what the students read. Says Royster:

> More, they're even simplifying the English in their guidebook on how to read textbooks. The previous editions of this guide, published by the Association of American Publishers, were written at the twelfth-grade reading level. Now it has been rewritten to fit a ninth grade reading level. And this for college freshmen.[95]

Royster reports that at the University of Wisonsin in Madison more than one third of the applicants to its school of journalism, where writing ability is a necessity, cannot meet the requirements in spelling, grammar, word usage, and punctuation. He puts most of the blame for this appalling situation on the many teachers and administrators who are convinced that reading and written expression are outmoded--that one can acquire all of the data one really needs through visual means. Royster says:

> The plain truth is that without language we can neither learn nor think. And those to whom written language is a mystery find, like some primitive people that the world itself is a mystery.[96]

It should further be added that the ability to write English at an acceptable level is not only important because of Royster's arguments concerning language skills. Practice in writing at least parts of classroom examinations, as noted above, gives the student the skill in presenting substantive material which has been learned. Bloom's famous Taxonomy explains this problem in detail and has long been recognized as an authority in this area. Classroom examinations which are limited to "objective" formats, while they can be quite difficult to "pass," do not offer the student this valuable experience, which is so important if he is to be considered educated at even a modest level.

While this paper is mainly concerned with education at the community college level, there should also be a reference to the public schools as well if the problem is to be understood fully. Charles Silberman, author of "Crisis in the Classroom," the study that popularized many of the innovations of the 1960's, has recently criticized the way the concept of "open classrooms" has been put into use in thousands of schools throughout the country. Silberman says that in some of these:

> The noise level got so high that nobody knew what he was doing. They used programmed instruction which is not individual in the real sense. It was chaos, and kids didn't learn a goddam thing.97

The above problem cannot be explained away simply by stating that the concepts are good but that they have rarely been employed properly. Perhaps some innovative theories and ideas are simply too esoteric to be of much practical use, although it is possible that the open classroom idea, under ideal circumstances, might have some merit. Still, in education we must deal with the pragmatic; what cannot be put to practical use, given the obviously difficult problems that exist in many classrooms, may not be useful in the long run.

As suggested above, moderate and carefully considered innovative practices, combined with a generous amount of proven traditional methods, may be the best answer to this controversial problem. Curriculums and instruction undoubtedly will be somewhat different a decade hence from what they are today. But let us not assume that they will be so changed as to be nearly unrecognizable compared with today's approaches--as some critics would lead us to believe. Today many innovative techniques which were thought to be a panacea for the classroom only a few years ago are now being seriously questioned and even discarded. For example, there is at the present time a strong move back to phonics techniques in the teaching of reading. In many areas of the country the popularity of the permissive and the open school is already slowing down compared with that of a more traditional institution. Reports Newsweek:

> At the "open-education" school [in Pasedena, California] the enrollment is 550 and the waiting list is 515. At the John Marshall Fundamental School, however, a total of 1,700 students are enrolled and the waiting list has passed the 1,000 mark.[98]

Newsweek reports similar public school enrollments in many areas of the country today.

Dean Mario Fantini's book Public Schools of Choice asks for the establishment of all kinds of educational institutions for all kinds of people. If some students flourish in an open-classroom environment, they should be able to have one. For those who seem to need a more traditional structure, that too should be available.[99] On balance, the growing call for a return to the basics seems a healthy indication that many Americans have been questioning some educational nostrums given them by a few well-meaning but misdirected innovators.[100] If the printed book is still the major teaching tool, as mentioned above, perhaps educational change will be steady but more moderate than some people suspect.

CHAPTER III

Methodology or Procedure

In order to make this study both manageable and comprehensive, it was decided to limit it to two academic areas at each of the five South Florida community colleges involved: social science and English-foreign language. In a few instances this included instructors who taught some "Directed Studies" courses (for the seriously underprepared students). At one campus the foreign language instructors were not included, since courses at that institution were all taught at another campus. At two campuses, speech instructors were included within the English Department.

The five colleges included in the study were Broward Community College (Central Campus) in Fort Lauderdale--the home institution of the investigator; Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus) in Miami; St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus); Manatee Community College in Bradenton; and Edison Community College in Fort Myers. Twenty respondents completed the instruments (both objective and subjective) at each of the two largest campuses (Miami-Dade and Broward); twelve each at St. Petersburg and Manatee; and ten at Edison, seventy-four in all. These represented approximately the following percentages of all instructors in the social science and English-foreign language areas of the respective campuses:

Broward	Miami-Dade	St. Petersburg	Manatee	Edison
$\frac{20}{50}$	$\frac{20}{65}$	$\frac{12}{35}$	$\frac{12}{30}$	$\frac{10}{25}$

It was felt that the above percentages were sufficiently high to yield significant findings, although, of course, one cannot assume that they represent opinions of all faculty members in all academic areas of the respective campuses.

As previously indicated, the study employed the use of two instruments, each of which concerned faculty opinions about curriculum and instruction. The first (Part I) was a ten-item instrument, the responses of which were scaled from 1 to 5 to represent degrees of agreement with each item; "1" representing "strongly disagree," to "5," "strongly agree." The second section (Part II) included six subjective questions calling for open-ended responses. It was hoped that this plan of using both objective and subjective responses would contribute toward more comprehensive and stronger findings than an objective response form alone, which is often used in investigations. Of course, the procedure used was more difficult to employ than the typical mail-in objective response format.

Since Broward was the home institution of the investigator, the instruments were first distributed at that campus; also, faculty member assistants were not needed, as they were at the other four institutions. A limited "trial run" distribution of the questionnaires was employed at Broward to ascertain if there were any ambiguous statements or questions in the instruments. Three phrases fell into this category and were revised. Two extended visits to the

Miami-Dade (South) Campus were made to obtain the required number of participants, and to complete at least the objective part of the instrument (in most instances) during the visits. At the other three campuses, where fewer respondents were involved at each campus, only one visit was necessary.

Except for the Broward Campus, one or two faculty members who were acquaintances of the investigator introduced him personally, or indirectly by message, to many of the available faculty members and helped in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. In some instances the respondents completed both instruments while the investigator was in their general office area. In most cases, however, the instruments were returned by mail within a week or two, after they had been collected by the cooperating faculty members on the respective campuses. A few questionnaires were completed later and sent directly to the investigator.

Since Broward was the investigator's home institution, many respondents were able to return the instruments through the campus mail system, although some returned them in person. At Miami-Dade, where twenty participants were involved, (as at Broward) two faculty acquaintances assisted, one from social science and one from English. At each of the other three campuses only one faculty assistant was needed. All of these aides were thoroughly oriented in the format and objectives of the study, so that they could answer any of the respondents' questions in the absence of the investigator.

Each respondent was instructed to write his numerical answers to each of the statements in Part I in the spaces provided on the instrument itself. The subjective responses for Part II were written (or typed in some instances) on separate pages of paper. A copy of both parts of the instrument is included below.

Faculty Opinion On Curriculum And Instruction

Part I (Objective Responses)

(please put correct numerical response in the space provided)

Response Scale Key

strongly agree	5
agree	4
undecided	3
disagree	2
strongly disagree	1

____ 1. The prime consideration of most community colleges should be to accommodate the underprepared student.

____ 2. More "innovative" programs should be introduced into the community college.

____ 3. In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

____ 4. Many specific liberal arts or general education course requirements are no longer mandatory at community colleges. This is a good trend.

____ 5. Student evaluations of their instructors may intimidate the latter. This may help cause academic grade inflation.

____ 6. The state of Florida has recently required more instructional accountability. This is a good trend in general for community college education.

____ 7. College entrance scores are reported to have deteriorated by more than 15 percent in recent years. This should be a matter for serious concern in higher education.

____ 8. A structured course is more compatible to my teaching format than a non-structured one.

____ 9. So-called "educational hardware" should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor as the term is now understood.

____ 10. The trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which will allow students to study at their own rate in most classes.

Part II (Subjective Responses)

Please respond on separate pages to the following open-ended questions.

1. Do you believe the use of the College Level Educational Program (C.L.E.P.) test, which often allows a student to preempt a course if he scores at least in the 50th percentile, is a proper substitute for taking a course? Should the percentile requirement for passing be higher? Should some subjective or written responses also be mandatory as well as the objective ones now required?

2. Comment on the use of individualized instructional formats (study at your own rate, etc.) for classroom learning. What do you think of learning and behavioral objectives systems as an instructional format? What experience, if any, have you had with them?

3. Comment on the use of the lecture and class discussion in the community college classroom. To what extent do you use each and why?

4. Do you believe that there has been an overuse of the all-objective test format in classroom tests? Should students be required to take more subjective or combination-type tests (objective-subjective) in order to gain some experience in writing and in organizing skills under test conditions?

5. Comment on the practice of "academic grade inflation" (instructors grading students higher than their work warrants), which is reported to have occurred in recent years. Do you believe this has occurred? Is one of these reasons the practice of using student evaluations of their instructors? Comment.

6. In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and the underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little. Do these adjustments threaten academic standards or goals? Comment.

In Chapter IV, under "Findings, (Analysis and Evaluation)" both sections of the instrument will be described. Each item will be presented individually, followed by "Results" and "Comment" in Part I, and by "Analyses" in Part II. In Chapter IV there will also be summary comprehensive analyses following Parts I and II respectively. Also, five separate tables in the Appendix of this study will graphically represent the responses of all seventy-four of the participants. A majority of the detailed responses to the subjective questions will also be found in the Appendix. Because of space limitations, repetitious, redundant and overly long responses will sometimes be abridged or omitted. A representative sample of the responses to all of the subjective or open-ended questions will be included in the Appendix. While the number of respondents from the five campuses in this study is limited, it is sufficiently representative to make a study of this type valuable.

Chapter V, the final chapter of this Major Applied Research Project, will include a summary of the material covered in the first four chapters. The hypotheses will be restated as inferences with some degree of commitment and generalization. Recommendations and practical suggestions for implementation of the findings will be mentioned as well as some suggestions for possible additional research.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Analyses of the Ten Objective and the Six Subjective Open-Ended Responses

Statistical Analyses of the Ten Objective Responses

Comparing Responses of the Instructors: The five possible responses to each objective statement were compared to the five possible responses to each of the other statements for each campus in two-dimensional contingency tables. The expected value tables contained excessive numbers of zero or low value entries, which precluded valid statistical conclusions. Therefore, the responses "strongly disagree" (1) through "strongly agree" (5) were reassigned values of "disagree" (4) for the first two classifications and "agree" (2) for the last two. The intermediate classification "undecided" (3) was deleted. There was an average of only six responses omitted from each table. The new contingency tables developed from the adjusted data produced two-dimensional tables containing only four cells and expected values entries, which resulted in valid statistical chi-square tests.

A most significant comparison occurred between Statement 9 ("whether educational hardware should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a 'facilitator for learning' than an instructor as the term is now understood") and Statement 2 (supporting more innovative programs). Those who supported more innovative programs (Statement 2) also tended to believe that educational hardware would take over the duties of the instructor. Those who disagreed with Statement 2 also tended to disagree with Statement 9. This high amount of disagreement exceeded expected values with a high degree of statistical significance ($p < .001$).

Another interesting comparison was observed between responses to Statements 5 and 10. Those teachers who felt intimidated by student evaluations of their instructors (5) also disapproved to a great extent of individualized instruction (10), while those who looked with favor on student evaluations of their instructors thought well of individualized instruction. From this it might be said that instructors who had less fear of being evaluated by students might prefer a more personal relationship with students. On the other hand, individualized instruction sometimes has included auto-tutorial (programmed instruction, etc.), whereby the instructor plays an even more reduced part in teaching the individual student than in large lecture classes. In any event, the relationship between Statements 5 and 10 shows a significant statistical validity of $p < .001$. This is far beyond the level of significance of .05 (or .01), values below which chance is usually not considered to play a part. Of course, the statistical factor can be interpreted in a number of ways.

In a comparison between Statements 8 (preference in teaching a structured course) and 10 (that the future in community college education should include more individualized instruction) it was expected that a majority of those who preferred a structured teaching format would not like individualized instruction. However, the percentage that took this position far exceeded the expected value ($p < .001$).

In all, there were twenty-seven tables with statistically significant p-values ($p < .05$). Twelve of the statistically most significant of these are included in the Appendix along with their respective expected value tables, chi-squares and probabilities.

Comparing Responses by Institution: As was true with the questions, a statistically valid conclusion in a comparison between the instructors and the campuses studied was not possible because of the large number of cells containing no values or small values (less than 5). Therefore, the campuses were grouped into two classifications: Broward (Central), Miami-Dade (South) and St. Petersburg (Clearwater) were listed as large; Manatee and Edison as small. In a comparison between large and small campuses, in reference to the ten objective statements, there was no significant difference. On the other hand, there was a recognizeable difference in objective responses between the St. Petersburg campus and the other four campuses, although this did not reach the statistically significant difference value of .05 to reduce the factor of chance. The comparison between St. Petersburg and the four other campuses will be examined in detail in Chapter IV. Statistical data from the computer comparing campuses and instructors, as well as open-ended response data, can be found in the Appendix of this study.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Part I

Analysis of the Objective Responses to the Ten Statements in Part I of the Instrument (by Campus)

Key to Scale Values

strongly agree	5
agree	4
undecided	3
disagree	2
strongly disagree	1

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
20 Respondents

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	2.25	2.90	3.85	2.55	3.2	3.2	3.9	3.3	2.1	2.6

Average Numerical Response Values from the Twenty Broward Participants for Each of the Ten Objective Statements

Statement 1

The prime consideration of most community colleges should be to accommodate the underprepared student.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	2
undecided	3
disagree	4
strongly disagree	5

Comment

Even though there is little doubt that an important function of the community college is to accommodate the underprepared student, most of the respondents (ratio of fourteen to four) did not agree that this should be its major responsibility. It is sometimes implied in much of the community college literature that great emphasis in the community college should be on helping underprepared students to succeed in their studies, and this may indeed be one of the prime missions of the community college. Yet from the above results it is quite clear that most of the respondents at Broward did not believe that this should be the major function of the community college. A number of oral statements at Broward pointed out that one of the major weaknesses of the system as it now exists is that the community college has already lowered its standards far too much in a vain effort to accommodate many students who are "unwilling to be accommodated."

Statement 2

More "innovative" programs should be introduced into the community college curriculum.

Comment

While eight instructors were generally in agreement with this statement, eleven were not. It is possible that not all of the respondents interpreted the word "innovation" in the same way. For some the term may have had a positive connotation, with "innovative program" being equated with good simply because it was innovative. For the majority the term may have taken on a more pejorative meaning because some respondents might have ascertained through personal experience that many so-called "innovative" programs have not necessarily been useful.

Statement 3

In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

Results

strongly agree	10
agree	3
undecided	1
disagree	5
strongly disagree	1

Comment

The fact that thirteen respondents were in agreement while only six were not indicates that the majority have been concerned that accommodation for the underprepared may have gone too far, compared with an emphasis on cognitive learning as such. This investigator has noticed that at Broward during the past few years, especially, more instructors have spoken in informal conversations concerning this problem--far more than during the period of the early sixties, when grading more accurately reflected the quality of a student's work.

Statement 4

Many specific liberal arts or general education course requirements are no longer mandatory at community colleges. This is a good trend.

Results

strongly agree	2
agree	4
undecided	2
disagree	7
strongly disagree	5

Comment

Twelve respondents disagreed with the statement that the reduction of specific general education course requirements was good, while only six supported this trend. In 1971 changes were made at Broward concerning the associate degree requirements. As a result, courses such as foreign languages, history, political science, and certain English courses are no longer required. It is now possible to earn a degree by taking very few specific courses that are mandatory. This change allows students to choose programs which appear to many instructors to be reduced in vigor and one-sided.

Statement 5

Student evaluations of their instructors may intimidate the latter. This may tend to cause academic grade inflation.

Results

strongly agree	3
agree	8
undecided	1
disagree	6
strongly disagree	2

Comment

An eleven to eight majority agreed with this statement. In fact, during the 1974-1975 academic year the faculty voted to do away with the student evaluation of instructors' formats because of dissatisfaction with the instrument. It is possible that a new questionnaire may be adopted in the future, but as yet no decision has been made. Many Broward instructors have admitted in informal conversations that they were often forced to change their teaching style in order to "score well" on the student evaluations--including a reduction in academic standards. While a number of studies were made in the late 1960's and early 1970's in support of student evaluations of their instructors, more recent ones have indicated that they were contributing to academic grade inflation and lowered standards. This problem will be discussed in greater detail below.

Statement 6

The state of Florida has recently required more instructional accountability. This is a good trend in general for community college education.

Results

strongly agree	4
agree	5
undecided	4
disagree	5
strongly disagree	2

Comment

The results of faculty opinion concerning this statement were divided, with nine in favor and seven opposed. It is possible that a number of respondents were not quite sure what was meant by accountability in this instance. Indeed, the Florida State Legislature, the Florida State Community College Council, and the administrations of the various Florida community colleges are still uncertain as to what will be involved within this concept. Indeed, the definition of what should be included within the parameters of the term "accountability" is a nationwide dilemma; the state of Michigan and other states have also been wrestling with the implications of the problem. Perhaps many more instructors will support the principle of accountability when its implications and format are more specifically defined.

Statement 7

College entrance scores are reported to have deteriorated by more than 15 percent in recent years. This development should be a matter of serious concern for community college education.

Results

strongly agree	10
agree	4
undecided	2
disagree	2
strongly disagree	2

Comment

The fourteen to four general agreement with this statement leaves little doubt concerning most of the respondents' feelings about this statement. The problem of reduced academic achievement scores has repeatedly been reported in the popular media and in scholarly journals. Undoubtedly the Broward instructors have seen its impact on their own classes. Since reduced achievement scores are constantly being reported in the press as being concomitant with academic grade inflation, this is perhaps an even more serious problem. This development has often been a topic of discussion among B.C.C. faculty members.

Statement 8

A structured course is more compatible to my teaching format than a non-structured one.

Results

strongly agree	4
agree	8
undecided	1
disagree	4
strongly disagree	3

Comment

Since twelve respondents agreed and only seven disagreed, the affirmatives showed a decided advantage. Those who disagreed might have done so for a number of reasons. Some may have believed that innovative teaching methods often coincide with non-structured or "freer" teaching, which might better accommodate underprepared students; others may have thought structured teaching formats would inhibit "new students," whose curriculum should operate on a day-to-day basis according to student need. While programmed instruction and learning packages are usually considered structured, the fact that they are also employed in an open-ended time format might be considered non-structured.

Statement 9

Educational "hardware" should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor, as the term is now understood.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	3
undecided	3
disagree	9
strongly disagree	4

Comment

Since thirteen disagreed generally and only four agreed with this statement, there is little doubt that most of the Broward people were opposed to the statement. Part of this overwhelmingly negative response may have occurred because of reports in the media that educational "hardware," including much audio-visual equipment, which at one time was thought would become the panacea for most instructional problems, has not achieved as much as had been expected. For example, TV equipment that was so ubiquitous in the Dade and Broward County public school classrooms in the 1960's has largely been removed because of disappointing results. While such equipment may be useful as an adjunct to the work of the instructor, its limitations are seen perhaps more clearly today than a decade or two ago. The negative response to this statement may also have occurred because of some instructors' self-interest; they may have feared that such instructional equipment might threaten their teaching positions in this day of academic underemployment.

Statement 10

The trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which will allow students to study at their own rate in most cases.

Results

strongly agree	4
agree	2
undecided	2
disagree	10
strongly disagree	2

Comment

The large ratio of disagreement to agreement on this statement (twelve to six) may have resulted from the fact that some respondents believed, as many indicated in their subjective responses below, that individualized instruction (not only small classes with almost a one-to-one relationship between student and instructor, but also the use of learning packages, programmed instruction, etc.) may encourage the less motivated students to procrastinate with their work. This has been documented not only in community colleges, but also at institutions such as Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, and at Nova High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Others may have been convinced that working at one's own rate with learning packages and programmed formats can be a rather dull and solitary effort for the average student in spite of the so-called "reward system" built into these methods. Of course, auto-tutorial and other individualized instructional methods can be very useful in some situations. The one-to-one relationship between teacher and seriously underprepared student (sometimes employed in very small classes) can also be useful. But this is a costly format for financially squeezed institutions.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
20 Respondents

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	2.2	2.8	4.0	2.3	3.3	3.3	3.9	3.8	2.2	2.8

Average Numerical Responses of the Twenty Miami-Dade Participants for each of the Ten Objective Statements

Statement 1

The prime consideration of most community colleges should be to accommodate the underprepared student.

Results

strongly agree	0
agree	5
undecided	0
disagree	9
strongly disagree	6

Comment

By a fifteen to five margin the respondents at Miami-Dade generally disagreed with this statement. In a discussion with some of them, a few suggested that the statement might be true for Miami-Dade's downtown campus, where the majority of the students are supposed to be disadvantaged and/or underprepared. It was also suggested that it might be true to some degree at the Miami-Dade North Campus. The respondents at South Campus believed that their function at that campus was more eclectic; that as much emphasis should be placed on the average and gifted students as on the seriously underprepared, although they did admit that their campus had special programs for the latter. Several spoke negatively about the success of these courses.

Statement 2

More "innovative programs" should be introduced into the community college.

Results

strongly agree	3
agree	5
undecided	0
disagree	9
strongly disagree	3

Comment

By a twelve to eight margin the respondents disagreed with the statement. In discussing the problem with some of them, some said that the term "innovation" had a pejorative meaning to them if it simply meant that still more innovative approaches should be introduced even though many had proved to be disappointments. Few were against innovation as such, but some expressed the desire that these formats should be tested and digested more carefully before they were introduced on a large scale. On the other hand, a few strongly supported more innovative techniques or principles.

Statement 3

In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

Results

strongly agree	5
agree	10
undecided	1
disagree	4
strongly disagree	0

Comment

The overwhelmingly affirmative response of fifteen to four left no doubt that most of the respondents believed that community college accommodation of the underprepared may have gone too far. Experience with disinterested students, and reports in the popular media about lowered achievement scores may have had an impact on these respondents, as some mentioned verbally.

Statement 4

Many specific liberal arts or general education course requirements are no longer mandatory at community colleges. This is a good trend.

Results

strongly agree	0
agree	5
undecided	0
disagree	11
strongly disagree	4

Comment

The negative votes were favored by a ratio of fifteen to five. Some of the respondents, especially those teaching English, said that in recent years specific general education course requirements for the associate degree had been much reduced. They claimed that it was now possible for students pursuing college transfer programs to take a hodge-podge of "easy" courses in their own area of interest almost to the exclusion of a "balanced" academic fare. Instructors teaching English composition were especially concerned that students were able to transfer to the upper division of the university with less than minimum writing skills.

Statement 5

Student evaluations of their instructors may intimidate the latter. This may contribute to academic grade inflation.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	10
undecided	2
disagree	7
strongly disagree	0

Comment

By an eleven to seven margin there was agreement with the statement. Three or four of these respondents said orally that academic grade inflation had become a reality not only in community colleges but also at many four-year institutions. Several of the instructors spoke of this development at Miami-Dade; it has several times been reported in the local press. One of the causes for it, several respondents maintained, was the system of student's evaluating their instructors.

Statement 6

The state of Florida has recently required more institutional accountability. This is a good thing in general for community college education.

Results

strongly agree	0
agree	11
undecided	4
disagree	3
strongly disagree	2

Comment

By an eleven to five margin the Miami-Dade people supported the statement. Several spoke strongly against the so-called "I Division," which was supposed to help prepare academically deficient students for regular classes. They claimed that little was being accomplished in those classes as far as they could ascertain. Perhaps they felt (as indicated by their responses to Statement 6) that more accountability in this and other areas would help to improve the quality of education and academic standards at the institution.

Statement 7

College entrance scores are reported to have deteriorated by more than 15 percent in recent years. This development should be a matter for serious concern in higher education.

Results

strongly agree	9
agree	4
undecided	3
disagree	3
strongly disagree	1

Comment

By a thirteen to four margin the respondents voted in the affirmative that deterioration in student scores was a matter of concern. Three pointed out that less rigorous academic standards were employed in recent years than previously, both at the secondary level and at the community college. They reported constantly seeing the results of lowered achievement levels in their classes. On the other hand, two respondents stated that they did not believe scores on achievement tests, such as the Florida Twelfth Grade Test, should be of much concern. They felt these tests should be altered to accommodate the abilities of some of the "new students."

Statement 8

A structured course is more compatible with my teaching format than a non-structured one.

Results

strongly agree	6
agree	9
undecided	1
disagree	3
strongly disagree	1

Comment

By a ratio of fifteen to four these instructors chose the structured over the non-structured format. Several said that in their opinion the day of the "rap session" class was, or at least should be, diminishing in importance; that it had become popular to some extent as a result of the Vietnam War, and may now have begun to "bottom out." As a teaching-learning device it may now, to some degree, have outlived its usefulness. Some argued that it had often been used to accommodate students, but that it had been overrated as a teaching technique.

Statement 9

Educational "hardware" should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor, as the term is now understood.

Results

strongly agree	2
agree	3
undecided	0
disagree	7
strongly disagree	8

Comment

Fifteen of twenty respondents were opposed to this statement. These instructors pointed out that many students did not enjoy auto-tutorial instruction, although two respondents insisted that its use would be expanded in the future. Some said that the lack of verbal interchange between instructor and student that usually exists in conventional classes was a major weakness of instruction by "teaching machines." This might be the instructional format used if the instructor were merely to be a "facilitator for learning," they maintained.

Statement 10

The trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which will allow students to study at their own rate in most classes.

Results

strongly agree	2
agree	6
undecided	1
disagree	10
strongly disagree	1

Comment

By an eleven to eight margin the vote was negative. While there is some similarity between Statements 9 and 10, there was stronger disagreement with Statement 9 than with 10. This may have resulted from the fact that Statement 9 actually indicated a reduced role for the instructor, while 10 simply suggested a greater use of individualized instruction. In any event, neither statement was supported by a majority of the respondents at Miami-Dade.

St. Petersburg Community College
(Clearwater Campus) - 12 Respondents

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	2.83	4.0	3.5	3.75	2.75	3.91	3.75	3.17	3.58	3.75

Average Numerical Response Values of the Twelve St. Petersburg Participants for each of the Ten Objective Statements

Statement 1

The prime consideration of most community colleges should be to accommodate the underprepared student.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	4
undecided	0
disagree	6
strongly disagree	1

Comment

By a ratio of seven to five, respondents at St. Petersburg disagreed with the first statement. However, this was a lower ratio of disagreement than at either Broward or Miami-Dade.

Statement 2

More "innovative" programs should be introduced into the community college.

Results

strongly agree	7
agree	2
undecided	0
disagree	3
strongly disagree	0

Comment

The respondents at St. Petersburg differed radically from those at Broward and Miami-Dade on this statement.

St. Petersburg definitely favored more innovative programs and procedures in the classroom (nine to three), while the other two campuses, although mixed in their response, slightly favored the negative. Since several of the St. Petersburg respondents taught special classes for the underprepared student, this may have been a factor concerning the strong interest in more innovative teaching procedures.

Statement 3

In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

Results

strongly agree	2
agree	7
undecided	0
disagree	1
strongly disagree	2

Comment

By a nine to three margin the St. Petersburg respondents were similar to Broward and Miami-Dade in that they believed that the community college may now be trying to accommodate the underprepared student at the expense of cognitive learning. This is an interesting point, considering the fact that these same respondents supported more innovative programs. Apparently they believe, unlike the Broward and Miami-Dade people, that more innovative programs can produce more cognitive learning.

Statement 4

Many specific liberal arts or general education course requirements are no longer mandatory at community colleges. This is a good trend.

Results

strongly agree	3
agree	6
undecided	0
disagree	3
strongly disagree	0

Comment

By a nine to three ratio the response to this statement was affirmative. Again this was a significantly different result from Broward's and Miami-Dade's. Except for Statement 3, the St. Petersburg instructors have responded quite differently from those at Broward and Miami-Dade. At this campus a "reading specialist" as well as two instructors in the "Directed Studies" program, which is being phased out, were included in the group. This fact may have had some influence on the responses. Still the personalities and philosophies of the respondents may have been the more important deciding factors.

Statement 5

Student evaluations of instructors may intimidate the latter. This may help to cause academic grade inflation.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	4
undecided	0
disagree	5
strongly disagree	2

Comment

By the close margin of seven to five these instructors disagreed with the statement. The closeness of the ratio does not make the result very different from the Broward and Miami-Dade scores, where the result was narrowly in the affirmative. Of course, some instructors dislike admitting that student evaluations of instructors might have any affect on their grading policies. While student evaluations of instructors may possibly benefit instruction to some degree, a number of respectable studies have recently appeared to show that there is a correlation between student evaluations of instructors and academic grade inflation. Some previous studies had taken an opposite position.

Statement 6

The state of Florida has recently required more instructional accountability. This is a good trend in general for community college education.

Results

strongly agree	4
agree	5
undecided	1
disagree	2
strongly disagree	0

Comment

These respondents, by a nine to two margin, agreed with the statement--even more so than instructors at Broward and Miami-Dade. St. Petersburg apparently interpreted "accountability" in its best connotation, and did not believe that accountability might bring unnecessary "red tape" reports, with an emphasis on the wrong things. Certainly accountability at its best is a good thing. Let us hope that Florida accountability will help to improve education, which it very well might.

Statement 7

College entrance achievement scores are reported to have deteriorated by more than 15 percent in recent years. This development should be a matter for serious concern in higher education.

Results

strongly agree	5
agree	3
undecided	0
disagree	2
strongly disagree	2

Comment

By an eight to four ratio these respondents agreed with the statement. This was a similar but not quite so definite result as at Broward and Miami-Dade, where agreement was even more in the affirmative. In any event, the majority agreed that the problem is a serious one. Perhaps some of those voting in the negative did so because they felt that achievement tests should be changed to accommodate the abilities of some underprepared students. This suggestion has been made in some educational journals.

Statement 8

A structured course is more compatible for my teaching format than a non-structured one.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	6
undecided	1
disagree	2
strongly disagree	2

Comment

Seven supported the more structured course and four the non-structured one. This result is similar to that at Broward and Miami-Dade, although the latter two institutions were somewhat more affirmative in their support.

Statement 9

Educational "hardware" should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor as the term is now understood.

Results

strongly agree	1
agree	6
undecided	2
disagree	2
strongly disagree	1

Comment

By a seven to three ratio the respondents at this campus agreed with the statement. At Broward and Miami-Dade the result was virtually the reverse. The people at St. Petersburg seemed more inclined to put their reliance on educational "hardware," including audio-visual equipment, than those at Miami-Dade and Broward, just as they seem to have supported other more liberal approaches than the latter.

Statement 10

The trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which will allow students to study at their own rate in most classes.

Results

strongly agree	4
agree	4
undecided	1
disagree	3
strongly disagree	3

Comment

By a ratio of eight to three these respondents agreed with the statement. This result is again quite different from those at Broward and Miami-Dade. Besides the reasons indicated above, still another factor may help explain this difference. The investigator was able to ascertain that the assisting faculty member at St. Petersburg was a former elementary school teacher with a very innovative and liberal educational philosophy. She completed one of the instruments herself. While this does not explain the liberal persuasion of the St. Petersburg respondents compared with those of the two previous institutions, this situation, together with the fact that two of the respondents taught "Directed Studies" as well as English, may have been a factor of some importance.

Manatee Community College and Edison Community College

Because the final two campuses, Manatee and Edison, were smaller than the three previous ones, it was decided to study them simultaneously.

Manatee Community College
12 Respondents

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	1.8	3.0	3.2	2.3	2.8	3.9	4.0	3.8	2.5	3.1

Average Numerical Response Values of the Twelve Manatee Participants for each of the Ten Objective Statements

Edison Community College
10 Respondents

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	1.9	3.1	4.1	2.1	3.2	2.7	4.4	3.5	1.9	2.7

Average Numerical Response Values of the Ten Edison Participants for each of the Ten Objective Statements

Statement 1

The prime consideration of most community colleges should be to accommodate the underprepared student.

Manatee Community College
Results

strongly agree	0
agree	4
undecided	0
disagree	7
strongly disagree	1

Edison Community College
Results

strongly agree	0
agree	1
undecided	1
disagree	4
strongly disagree	4

Comment

By an eight to four margin Manatee respondents did not agree that the prime consideration of most community colleges was to accommodate the underprepared student. By an eight to two ratio the Edison instructors also disagreed with the statement. Both of these were one-sided margins similar to those of Broward and Miami-Dade but different from that of St. Petersburg, where the ratio was only a close six to four in the negative.

Statement 2

More "innovative" programs should be introduced into the community college.

Manatee Community College Results

strongly agree	1
agree	5
undecided	1
disagree	4
strongly disagree	2

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	0
agree	5
undecided	1
disagree	4
strongly disagree	0

Comment

Since Manatee's preference on this statement was split six to six, and Edison was in favor of more innovative programs by only five to four, it could be said that the two were almost identical in their choice concerning more innovative programs. These results were similar to Broward's and Miami-Dade's. Only at St. Petersburg was there a strong preference (nine to three) for more innovative programs.

Statement 3

In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

Manatee Community College
Results

strongly agree	2
agree	5
undecided	1
disagree	2
strongly disagree	2

Edison Community College
Results

strongly agree	4
agree	4
undecided	1
disagree	1
strongly disagree	0

Comment

Manatee's seven to four agreement with the statement was not as strong as Edison's eight to one. Both results were similar to those of the other three campuses. In this statement at least, all campuses agreed rather strongly that in recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and the underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

Statement 4

Many specific liberal arts or general education course requirements are no longer mandatory at community colleges. This is a good trend.

Manatee Community College
Results

strongly agree	
agree	3
undecided	1
disagree	5
strongly disagree	3

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	0
agree	2
undecided	0
disagree	5
strongly disagree	3

Comment

Manatee by eight to three and Edison by eight to two disagreed with this statement. It is thus evident that these respondents favored more stringent general education course requirements for degree-seeking students. It is possible that the reduced specific general education course requirements may have helped to reduce the number of students taking courses in the respondent's teaching areas. Some instructors may have believed that the present less stringent course requirements may reduce the quality of education offered by the college. In any event, all campuses but St. Petersburg deplored the reduction in specific course requirements for the associate degree.

Statement 5

Student evaluations of their instructors may intimidate the latter. This may tend to cause academic grade inflation.

Manatee Community College Results

strongly agree	3
agree	2
undecided	0
disagree	4
strongly disagree	3

Edison Community College
Results

strongly agree	1
agree	5
undecided	0
disagree	3
strongly disagree	1

Comment

Manatee generally disagreed with this statement by seven to five, while Edison generally agreed by six to four. Even though the majorities were reversed, the results were so close that it could not really be said that the two institutions were radically opposed on the statement. Broward and Miami-Dade both agreed, by fairly close margins, that student evaluations of their instructors might intimidate the latter which could contribute to academic grade inflation. Cnly St. Petersburg differed radically from the others, with a nine to three ratio opposing the statement. In any event, this is a highly controversial problem which is being studied at the national level.

Statement 6

The state of Florida has recently required more instructional accountability. This is a good trend in general for community college education.

Manatee Community College
Results

strongly agree	4
agree	5
undecided	1
disagree	2
strongly disagree	0

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	1
agree	2
undecided	3
disagree	1
strongly disagree	3

Comment

By nine to two Manatee gave an affirmative response, but by six to four Edison disapproved. Those responding in the affirmative may have become disenchanted with both the instructor and student levels of achievement at both secondary and community college levels. For them, accountability may have meant that more academically demanding programs in both areas are what is needed. Of course, those who opposed the concept of state accountability may consider that this might lead to time-wasting efforts in filling out documents and forms, with little improvement in the achievement levels of students. Apparently more Edison than Manatee people saw accountability to the state as simply more "red tape" rather than better education for students.

Statement 7

College entrance achievement scores are reported to have deteriorated by more than 15 percent in recent years. This development should be a matter of serious concern in higher education.

Manatee Community College Results

strongly agree	3
agree	6
undecided	3
disagree	0
strongly disagree	0

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	5
agree	4
undecided	1
disagree	0
strongly disagree	0

Comment

Both campuses, Manatee by nine to zero and Edison by eight to zero, responded in the affirmative. By these wide margins both groups agreed that the problem of deteriorating academic achievement levels was of serious concern. In fact, the majority of the respondents from all five campuses agreed on this statement. Therefore, even though in many respects the St. Petersburg people differed materially from the other campuses on this statement, all were in agreement.

Statement 8

A structured course is more compatible with my teaching format than a non-structured one.

Manatee Community College Results

strongly agree	1
agree	9
undecided	1
disagree	1
strongly disagree	0

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	2
agree	3
undecided	3
disagree	2
strongly disagree	0

Comment

Both campuses favored a structured over a non-structured teaching format, Manatee by ten to one and Edison by five to two. Respondents from both campuses stated that by structured they did not mean rigid. Several pointed out that they did not believe in "rap sessions"--formats which sometimes pretend to help solve some of the personal problems students have and to "teach" at the same time. On the above statement all campuses but St. Petersburg took similar views.

Statement 9

Educational "hardware" should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor as the term is now understood.

Manatee Community College Results

strongly agree	0
agree	4
undecided	0
disagree	6
strongly disagree	2

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	
agree	1
undecided	
disagree	4
strongly disagree	4

Comment

Manatee and Edison disagreed with this statement by eight to four and eight to one ratios respectively. Since the statement concerning the instructor as a "facilitator for learning" was originally made more than a decade ago, with little indication even today that this development is indeed occurring, it is possible that these respondents have decided that this development will not occur in the foreseeable future. Perhaps the many reports in the media that much educational "hardware" is now "rusting in storage areas" because of its not having lived up to the sanguine prognostitions of its earlier supporters may also have influenced the respondents. Again, Broward and Miami-Dade agreed with the Manatee-Edison position but St. Petersburg took the opposing position by a close margin.

Statement 10

The trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which will allow students to study at their own rate in most classes.

Manatee Community College Results

strongly agree	1
agree	4
undecided	2
disagree	5
strongly disagree	0

Edison Community College Results

strongly agree	0
agree	3
undecided	2
disagree	4
strongly disagree	1

Comment

Manatee's respondents split evenly on this question, but Edison disagreed with the statement by a five to three ratio. These results were similar to the Broward and Miami-Dade respondents, who agreed with Edison by favoring the negative. St. Petersburg by a wide margin took the affirmative position--unlike any of the other campuses.

Faculty Opinion on Curriculum And Instruction

Part I (Objective Responses)

(please put correct numerical response in the space provided)

Response Scale Key

strongly agree	5
agree	4
undecided	3
disagree	2
strongly disagree	1

____ 1. The prime consideration of most community colleges should be to accommodate the underprepared student.

____ 2. More "innovative" programs should be introduced into the community college.

____ 3. In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

____ 4. Many specific liberal arts or general education course requirements are no longer mandatory at community colleges. This is a good trend.

____ 5. Student evaluations of their instructors may intimidate the latter. This may help cause academic grade inflation.

____ 6. The state of Florida has recently required more instructional accountability. This is a good trend in general for community college education.

____ 7. College entrance scores are reported to have deteriorated by more than 15 percent in recent years. This should be a matter for serious concern in higher education.

____ 8. A structured course is more compatible with my teaching format than a non-structured one.

____ 9. So-called educational "hardware" should take over most of the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor as the term is now understood.

____10. The trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which will allow students to study at their own rate in most classes.

Tables of Averaged Responses to the Ten Objective Statements for All Five Community College Campuses*

Broward Community College
(Central Campus)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	2.25	2.90	3.85	2.55	3.2	3.2	3.9	3.3	2.4	2.6

Miami-Dade Community College
(South Campus)

Statements	1	2	3	4	[illegible]	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	2.2	2.8	4.0	2.3	3.3	3.3	3.9	3.8	2.2	2.9

St. Petersburg Community College
(Clearwater Campus)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	2.83	4.0	3.5	3.75	2.75	3.91	3.75	3.17	3.38	3.75

Manatee Community College

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	1.8	3.0	3.2	2.3	2.8	3.9	4.0	3.8	2.5	3.1

Edison Community College

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Average Values	1.9	3.1	4.1	2.1	3.2	2.7	4.4	3.5	1.9	2.7

*Refer to page 93 for Statements 1-10.

Summarized Comparison of the Numerical Values of the Averaged Responses to the Ten Objective Statements for All Five Community College Campuses

Although the detailed tables representing the responses to the ten objective statements for all five community college campuses can be found in the Appendix of this study, their averaged responses can graphically be seen above. From the analyses of the statements which were made in Part I, it can be noted that, in general, St. Petersburg's responses showed a somewhat greater preference for innovation and for more liberalized curriculums than did those from the other four campuses. This can also be noticed by observing the above five tables. For example, St. Petersburg gave more affirmative responses to Statement 1, concerning the prime consideration of community colleges, than the other campuses.

Likewise, that same campus gave more affirmative response to increasing the number of innovative courses (Statement 2). Further, it was least concerned with the fact that student evaluations of their instructors might intimidate the latter which, therefore, might help to cause academic grade inflation (Statement 5). It was by a slight margin that the campus most supportive of instructional accountability as projected by the state of Florida was least concerned about the fact that college entrance achievement scores had deteriorated (Statement 6). Further, St. Petersburg supported the structured teaching format the least of the five campuses (Statement 8). Also, by a substantial margin over the others, it felt that educational hardware should, in a few years, take over most of the duties of the instructor (Statement 9). On Statements 3 and 4 its preferences were similar to those of the other institutions.

While St. Petersburg's responses were not radically different from those of the other campuses, they were moderately so. Many of the reasons for this difference have already been discussed. It is interesting to note, however, that a number of respondents on the other four campuses admitted that in previous years they had taken a more innovative and liberal approach to instruction than they now do. Their retreat to a somewhat more moderate stance was in part the result of disappointing reports in the media and elsewhere concerning declining student achievement scores, after many years of innovative experimentation and their own experiences in teaching. Some of these reflections have been indicated in Part II of the present chapter and in the open-ended responses found in the Appendix.

Part II

Analyses of the Subjective Responses to the Six Open-Ended Questions

Question 1

Do you believe the use of the College Level Educational Program (C.L.E.P.) test, which often allows a student to preempt a course if he scores at least in the fiftieth percentile, is a proper alternative to taking a course? Should some subjective or written responses also be mandatory as well as the objective ones now used?

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

Approximately two thirds of Broward's respondents agreed, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, that students should be allowed to take the C.L.E.P. test in order to preempt courses in which they might have previous knowledge. On the other hand, virtually all of the participants suggested changes in the present format of the C.L.E.P. test. Most claimed that the fiftieth percentile requirement for passing was too low, maintaining that between the sixtieth and eightieth percentiles would be a more realistic figure. About three quarters of the respondents said that part of the test (at least 25 percent) should be subjective in nature. It should be pointed out that since 1974 the Broward students taking C.L.E.P. must take the newly devised subjective part of the English test. The Broward admissions office reported that since the introduction of the subjective section in the English test, less than half of the students who pass the objective part manage to pass the essay requirement, which is graded by the Broward English department. This fact alone may be enough to suggest the lack of validity of the test before the subjective section was required at Broward. Many Florida community colleges still do not require the essay part of the English C.L.E.P. test.

Some instructors choosing to eliminate C.L.E.P. at Broward said that in most subjective areas it tests only a limited amount of recognition of subject matter. They claimed that the benefits of classroom interaction, and other types of learning that can be gained only from actually taking a course, would be lacking. One foreign language instructor said that he was not opposed to allowing students to preempt basic courses by means of C.L.E.P. in order to take an advanced course in the area; yet he was opposed to giving college credit for preempting courses. He explained that high school graduates entering college with two years of a foreign language normally take an advanced course in that area; yet they do not receive college credit for the courses taken in high school which allowed them to enter an advanced college course. He asked, therefore, why a person passing a C.L.E.P. test should receive college credit when his knowledge of the course might be less than that of the high school graduate who did not receive credit for more knowledge. Finally, it can be said that the majority of Broward respondents did support the C.L.E.P. concept, but would like to change certain of its features.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

Approximately 60 percent of the Miami-Dade respondents supported the C.L.E.P. test, with three more giving very reluctant support to it. Most of those in favor of C.L.E.P. were very definite that the passing score should be raised from the fiftieth percentile to between the sixtieth and the eightieth. Several questioned the Florida State mandate of the fiftieth percentile. One pointed out that until recent years the University of Florida's requirement for passing the C.L.E.P. test was the seventieth percentile, and asked why this figure should not be adopted on a statewide level instead of the present fiftieth percentile one.

One respondent supported C.L.E.P. to allow students to enter an advanced course but not to be used for college credit. Others pointed out that C.L.E.P. was originally devised for the mature student who had been out of school for a number of years. These respondents opposed granting college credit to recent high school students who could not have gained very much experience while out of school--as opposed to the case of more mature students. Several of these people said that the C.L.E.P. tests were really not comprehensive enough to judge mastery of course material. A few Miami-Dade instructors said that the C.L.E.P. was satisfactory for testing skills such as mathematics, but claimed that freshman English tests, unless they were expanded to include a mandatory and substantial written section, should be abandoned. Unlike Broward, Miami-Dade does not require the written part of the English test. In fact, some respondents at Miami-Dade said that no C.L.E.P. test was valid unless it included at least a small section of written material.

One instructor said that C.L.E.P. test requirements are too low; that "they cheapen the quality and intent of the academic procedure." Still another said that one of his students in the previous term had failed English three times at the University of Miami and was making D's at Miami-Dade with two different instructors in two courses. Then the student was easily able to "clep" the courses. Another respondent wanted to eliminate the C.L.E.P. test and to substitute a departmental written test to be administered and graded by the college department of each academic area.

Finally, it can be said that while a majority of the Miami-Dade people supported the use of C.L.E.P. tests, most of them wished to have it altered. They wanted it to represent a more valid and rigorous experience for the student. This is especially interesting since at Miami-Dade hundreds of students take these tests successfully, without having to take the written section of the English test.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

About three-fourths of the St. Petersburg respondents supported the C.L.E.P. tests, but many would alter them. More than half wished to have the passing grade of the test raised. About two-thirds of those supporting the C.L.E.P.

tests asked for a written or subjective section--either for English alone or for all of the tests. Several said that the written section should not be included because of the time consumed in grading such tests. One supporter of C.L.E.P. tests said: "Let's free the student to let him get into the work he wants to get into." Two others insisted that the individual department or institution devise its own test, which would better conform to the requirements of that particular course offered at the college.

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

At Manatee about 70 percent of the respondents supported C.L.E.P. but many would like to make changes in its procedures by increasing the percentile score for passing, and by adding a written section to the exam, especially in English. One supporter wished to have the percentile for passing raised somewhat, but pointed out that the majority of people taking C.L.E.P. tests were in the upper 25 percent of their classes and went on to pass at an equally high level more advanced courses after having passed C.L.E.P. Another said the C.L.E.P. passing score was far too low, claiming that he had "clep" students who were unable to handle the following course sequence. Still another had mixed emotions, pointing out that as the parent of two children in college it was true that the financial benefits from C.L.E.P. were appealing. But as a teacher of English this respondent explained that preempting freshman English "denied the student the opportunity to learn specific and efficient techniques for developing research papers, which would be required of him in many academic areas." "Clepping out" most freshman courses at a major university, said this respondent, makes for a more difficult adjustment period.

Finally, while several people at Manatee accepted C.L.E.P. in its present form, the majority asked for changes. A few opposed the entire concept of C.L.E.P.

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

At Edison, support for C.L.E.P. is also mixed. More than half of the respondents supported it in general, but most of them wanted to raise the passing score to between the sixtieth and eighty-fifth percentiles. About the same number wanted to add a written section to the English tests. Several supported the use of C.L.E.P. in skills and highly factual courses. One opponent of the C.L.E.P. test said that college is, in part, an attitudinal and emotional experience which is by-passed by C.L.E.P. This respondent asked for more studies to see what kind of student is being turned out by C.L.E.P. exams. Another criticized the C.L.E.P. concept for not offering the personal experiences of hearing a creative instructor, or becoming involved in lively class discussions.

It can be said that the responses from all five colleges studied, on the average, gave perhaps a two-thirds support to C.L.E.P. tests. However, few of these people were satisfied with the test as it now exists. At least three-fourths of the respondents, whether supporting the use of the tests or not, asked for higher passing scores and for a written or subjective section of the test--at least for English. While it is true that the latter now exists as an optional part of the test, many Florida community colleges do not make this part mandatory. For example, as noted above, Broward does, but Miami-Dade does not. At Broward, relatively few people have been receiving C.L.E.P. credits, while at Miami-Dade each year many hundreds do so. One reason why so many people take and pass C.L.E.P. tests at this institution is that they are highly publicized there--more so than at Broward. The Miami-Dade Testing Office reported that it is possible through C.L.E.P. for a student to preempt 45 of 64 college credits needed for graduation. At no time while taking these tests does the student ever have to write a single sentence (even for the English test, under these circumstances.) While this system may save money for the state of Florida, and a great deal of time and effort for the student, definitive studies have not yet been made concerning the results of these tests.

Question 2

Comment on the use of individualized instructional formats (study at your own rate, etc.) for classroom learning. What do you think of learning and behavioral objectives systems as instructional formats? What experience, if any, have you had with them?

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

The majority of the respondents to this question were hesitant about supporting the concept of individualized instruction. Five pointed out that this type of instruction might encourage the average student to do less work than he would do in non-individualized or conventional classes. Several admitted that individualized instruction formats might be useful in classes for superior students who are highly motivated to "work on their own." Others said that this type of instruction might be useful for underprepared students who could not keep up with normal class work-loads and who must be given individualized help. A few pointed out that valuable interchange of ideas between instructor and students would be lost if an auto-tutorial type of individualized instruction were employed.

As for the use of behavioral objectives, support for this format was fairly evenly divided. Few ruled out the concept entirely, but many questioned its value if it concentrated on the learning of specified concepts and "bits of information" rather than on broad and flexible objectives. Three respondents did not favor rigid types of behavioral objectives whereby students learned specified types of information from the textbook to the exclusion of others. Several supported behavioral objectives which specified that a reasonable number of representative units in a course be covered. Flexible and comprehensive objectives were supported more than rigidly defined and detailed ones.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

At this institution, most of the respondents reported that they had had considerable experience with behavioral objectives, since writing them for their own courses had been mandated by campus administration. The responses concerning their value were mixed. Perhaps a quarter of them were strongly supportive while another quarter were just as firmly opposed. Many of the others took a middle position. Several pointed out that most good instructors use learning objectives, but without formalizing them by name. Some warned against the use of mechanized objectives "mandated from above." One instructor said that he had been required to write them out according to specifications from the campus administration, but that he would not employ them in his classes. It appeared that many respondents would be satisfied if objectives simply evolved from individual teaching formats, employed in an on-going, natural process. While the majority did not favor detailed behavioral objectives which the administration required them to write, many did support broader ones, which would ensure that most of the course outlines would be covered in an organized and structured manner.

As for individualized instruction, several people favored this format for teaching certain skills such as composition, or for instruction for superior students. It was also considered valuable in helping underprepared students in the "Directed Studies" or "I Division." The majority of respondents, on the other hand, opposed the use of individualized instructional formats for regular subject matter courses in the social and behavioral science areas, literature, etc. Two said individualized instructional formats of the programmed learning type reduced interaction between students and instructor. Others said that individualized instruction which can be used in very small classes is too expensive economically, especially in a period of economic recession. Three pointed out that allowing students to work at their own rate simply encourages average and below-average students to study less--to "goof off" instead of turning work in and taking exams at appropriate times. Yet, as already indicated, many respondents did see value in individualized instruction for certain skill training, for superior students, and for special classes for the seriously underprepared student.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

At this campus, unlike at Broward and Miami-Dade, behavioral objectives concepts were supported by more than a majority of the respondents, although a few were rather vehemently opposed to them. One responded to them affirmatively by referring to them as similar to "study guides," which to a degree describes them. Yet while behavioral objectives have been discussed in the literature of the community college extensively, especially in recent years, they sometimes are considered a modification of an old teaching practice that has been used intermittently for decades in the public schools; sometimes they were referred to as "workbooks." In the 1920's and 1930's teachers often used them, and critics referred to them as "busy work." Although students at that time disliked working with them, they probably did serve a useful purpose if they were not overused. Still, it is a bit surprising to hear that the refined formats are often included in the category of innovative instruction.

In any event, the St. Petersburg instructors, for the most part, supported them, but several complained that they sometimes are responsible for artificial or inflexible teaching, especially if they are not broadly structured. One St. Petersburg respondent even said that behavioral objectives were being used by their administration "to punish and intimidate instructors by requiring and evaluating behavioral objectives rather than as a means toward improved instruction." Two respondents said that behavioral objectives might not be suitable for everyone's teaching style, but if they accommodated an instructor's teaching style they could be helpful in the teaching process.

The responses concerning individualized instruction were mixed. Slightly more than a majority favored this format generally, but several were opposed because of time limitations--if "individualized" meant the individual attention of the instructor rather than auto-tutorial or programmed instruction. Many of those supporting individualized instructional formats did so because of the wide differences that exist in students' motivation and learning ability. It was indicated by three people that for the very slow student and for the superior student such instruction could be useful, but for the average student it sometimes encouraged him to "put off" required tasks.

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

Slightly over one half of these participants favored the use of behavioral objectives--but with reservations. One respondent said that "they have always been a part of learning, but are now more visible or descriptive of what the teacher actually expects to achieve with instruction." He probably was referring to the old-fashioned workbook format, mentioned by a St. Petersburg respondent above, which he now may believe to have been updated into "behavioral objectives." One person spoke of behavioral objectives as "another educational gimmick." A few considered them more important for skill courses than for "inexact disciplines."

Individualized instructional formats were supported guardedly, and several people said these could lead to poor teaching and learning if not used properly. A few warned that individualized instruction at some institutions often meant independent study, which they opposed except perhaps for superior students. One pointed out that if individualized study formats were of the programmed learning variety, with little student-teacher input, it could be detrimental to the learning process, which should include some instructor-student relationships. Several people took the eclectic approach, explaining that different people learn in different ways--different formats might be employed for the same course, including individualized instruction. In conclusion, it can be said that perhaps a bare majority of the Manatee participants supported both individualized instruction and behavioral objectives if these terms were broadly interpreted; however, there were some people who were strongly opposed to both.

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

At Edison, as at Miami-Dade and St. Petersburg, most of the respondents had had a great deal of experience dealing with behavioral objectives. Even so, their support for them was limited indeed, and sometimes the responses were quite hostile. Only about a third of the participants generally gave their approval. In fact, virtually none supported the concept of behavioral objectives as the major format for their own teaching. Most claimed that some administrators have gone too far in requiring community college instructors to use this approach for most of their teaching, regardless of the inclinations and preferences of the instructor as of the type of material being taught. Behavioral objective formats were compared with the correspondence school type of teaching by one participant, they were criticized for drastically reducing the time allowed for the lecture-discussion format, "which was especially useful in social science classes if maximum benefits to the student were to be achieved."

Individualized instructional formats were likewise criticized at Edison, although some respondents admitted that with some atypical students and in certain skill areas, like composition and typing, individualized instruction was useful. On the other hand, two respondents said that in courses dealing with controversial material, the lecture-discussion rather than individualized and auto-tutorial forms was preferable. Most respondents at Edison did not support the use of individualized formats for the majority of non-skill, subject matter classes on the community college level.

It can be said that individualized instructional formats of various types were not supported by the majority of the respondents at the five campuses except under very special circumstances. A substantial number of respondents did see a place for small group and auto-tutorial instruction in special programs for the seriously underprepared, where improved reading and composition skills rather than subject matter were of prime concern. Also, a limited number of superior students, both in regular and in "honors" classes, might be able to learn at an accelerated pace through some individualized instruction and course enrichment. For the vast majority of students, however, the conventional classroom format was preferred.

Question 3

Comment on the use of the lecture and class discussion in the community college classroom. To what extent do you use each and why?

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

At Broward the lecture-discussion format is still very much favored by most of the respondents. Indeed, many pointed out that the lecture is still perhaps the single most important teaching format, although many agreed that discussion in class was also important. Only two respondents mentioned specifically that other formats were of importance, although several did say they sometimes used audio visual materials. One instructor said that he was not especially interested in covering the subject matter of a course; indeed, he said that he probably covered only a small part of the course as such. He was primarily concerned with keeping his students interested so that they would not withdraw from his classes. Therefore, he said, he used films and other audio visual materials during most of his class periods. Most of the grades he gave were A's and B's; he was not concerned with academic standards as such.

On the other hand, the fact that many of the respondents said they used the lecture-discussion method almost exclusively indicates the popularity of these methods in spite of the myriad innovative formats so often promoted in educational textbooks and articles. It is difficult to believe that most of these instructors were unaware of some of these newer techniques (indeed, a few said they had tried some but were unhappy with the results and discarded them). Many simply indicated that for them the lecture-discussion works but, with some audio visual material included for change of pace. Only a very few used other more "innovative" techniques (games, rap sessions, small groups, etc.).

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

At this campus the lecture-discussion format was overwhelmingly the most popular one. Some did use audio visual materials to some extent. Only two respondents mentioned that they used "affective" learning approaches to any degree, while a significant number indicated indirectly that they did not. The great emphasis on innovative teaching methods, mentioned so often in educational literature (with the exception of some use of audio visual materials) seems to have had relatively little effect on these respondents. Indeed, two or three mentioned that the use of such devices as learning packages was something they had tried with disappointing results.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

At this campus a number of the respondents, more so than at Broward and Miami-Dade, appear to have put some emphasis on "small group" or other innovative teaching procedures. Still, about two-thirds supported the lecture-discussion technique as the prime format for their classes. One said that average and better-than-average students "seem to prefer it [lecture-discussion] and either do not need any other methods in order to learn or dislike the disruption that may result from changing their work-study habits." This same instructor said that "supplementing or substituting this with individualized methods is needed for underprepared or lower ability students who need prodding, repetition, graphic explanation--or their own time to do their work." Several said that when subject matter rather than skills is taught, the lecture should predominate.

Another respondent said that "the lecture and class discussion, the way I use them, are very valuable." This person said that he gets favorable student response on the evaluations of the instructor, and that many students comment that their class notes were most useful. He went on to say that he tried an individualized program learning package at one time and the class did significantly worse than with the lecture method. Some people supported the use of "AV" materials to some degree, and several spoke against the discussion method unless students and instructor were well prepared for it. It can be said that while at St. Petersburg somewhat more innovative approaches to teaching may have been supported than at Broward and at Miami-Dade, the majority of respondents still supported the lecture-discussion as the basis for their teaching.

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

At Manatee there was support for the lecture-discussion format by most respondents, but perhaps a third of these recognized the need for audio visual materials as a major teaching device. One mentioned that an ideal class should offer options; a combination of lecture-discussion, audio visual, and auto-tutorial, depending on the type of material being studied and the preferences and abilities of the students. One participant said he used lecture-discussion as the major format of his teaching "supported by periodic demonstrations and films." While there was some support for alternative teaching methods at Manatee, most respondents favored the use of the lecture-discussion format as the most important single type of presentation.

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

At Edison, lectures and class discussion emerged as the most important single format for more than three-fourths of the respondents. A few said they used audio visual materials rather frequently. Another preferred panel discussions and individualized formats. This teacher said "I limit lecture remarks only to clarification and to misunderstood principles, and to act as a devil's advocate in some situations--or to offer alternate solutions." One spoke against the use of the "learning package" type of individualized instruction. As noted above, more than two-thirds used the lecture-discussion for the most part, but the remainder used some of the formats mentioned above as well.

Question 4

Do you believe that there has been an overuse of the all-objective test format in classroom tests? Should students be required to take more subjective or combination-type tests (objective-subjective) in order to gain some experience and organizing skills under test conditions?

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

By an overwhelming majority of perhaps 80 percent, Broward instructors agreed that there has been an overuse of the all-objective test format at the college. Many people gave reasons why this phenomenon has occurred, including the fact that subjective exams take too long to grade. It may be true that many instructors have decided to use all-objective testing not only because they are so easy to grade, but also because their frequent use seemed to testify to their viability.

A significant number of participants at Broward was very concerned with the almost universal use of objective test formats in some departments.. One said:

> Before my days they used to say: 'high school gives you a decent education.' In my days they said: 'high school no longer gives you a decent education'--all it does is make you literatue and little more. Now all we can say is: 'high school does not even give one literacy, much less a decent education.'

A few respondents did say that in the English field there was not an overuse of objective tests, although one said that even in this area there was too much use of this format. Many admitted that the combination-type test (objective-subjective) was excellent. If the subjective section were used only on alternative tests (with the use of all-objective tests at other times) it would be possible for instructors to grade these tests without expending excessive periods of time. One respondent said: "If an instructor cannot take time to formulate good subjective test material and grade it according to clarity and content, he obviously does not have the time to prepare his classes correctly or to evaluate his teaching methods effectively."

Finally, it can be said that at Broward, most respondents were highly critical of the overuse of all-objective testing formats, but many admitted that they used them for various reasons.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

By a large ratio the Miami-Dade respondents agreed that there has been a great overuse of objective testing at that institution and a neglect of subjective formats. Several pointed out that students cannot get experience in writing and in analyzing questions under the pressure of test conditions if they do not take subjective-type tests. This ability is highly valued by employers seeking employees with the potential for advancement.

Many Miami-Dade people admitted that they employed objective test formats excessively because of large classes, and pointed out some advantages of this type of test. Yet most admitted that the combination (objective-subjective) format may be the best of all types. It can be added that the burden of grading subjective tests would not be too great even with large classes if perhaps two-thirds of testing were objective and one-third subjective.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

Overwhelmingly the St. Petersburg respondents agreed that there had been an overuse of the objective examination at that campus. One said that "tests of this kind often reflect the mindlessness of the course content and their irrelevance to the student, his goals and needs." He went on to say that written tests give the student experience in organizing material systematically and logically. Yet he was not sure how often students need this ability today if they transfer to the university. Another respondent doubted the value of written examinations. He pointed out: "No one gives essay exams. Therefore, why should we give essay exams to give students practice in essay exams which no one gives?" This statement is highly suspect, especially in reference to class at the university level. On the other hand, most of the other respondents strongly supported the value of written exams or a combination of both objective and subjective.

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

Every respondent at this campus agreed that there had been an overuse of objective testing at the expense of written exams, which, they said, were extremely valuable instructional tools. One person, for example, said that he very much favored subjective evaluation, pointing out that his students can elect a module which includes a research paper and some subjective testing. Another said: "I think many types of classes beat it (objective testing) to death." He said that he preferred to "stretch" students by making them organize facts and communicate them as well as to learn them. He did admit, however, that time and limited [academic] standards are the major drawbacks to their use. Still another said that in his opinion the essay test is the most valid measurement of student achievement. He pointed out, however, that "in many cases, class size precludes the use of this type of test."

Although all of the respondents agreed that objective testing is very much overused, many instructors have continued to use it exclusively. As noted earlier, the alternating of combination-type tests with all-objective ones could be the solution to the problem.

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

At this campus, all but one respondent strongly agreed that objective testing was being overused. Even the negative respondent said that subjective testing should be combined with the all-objective format, but brought up the usual problem of instructor limitation-time in grading these tests. One respondent pointed out that it is difficult to make a proper evaluation of the knowledge and skills of students by means of objective tests only. He explained that his tests were usually a combination of objective and subjective sections. Another said, "Objective tests, at least for me, are cop-outs. But I have been forced to take this easy way out because of the increased student load." A third person said that all-objective test formats are poor for any student. He pointed out that his students had no concept of writing or skills in organization. He pleaded for combination-type tests; otherwise, any skills learned in English composition, he maintained, "would atrophy."

At Edison, as at the other four campuses, there was strong support for more written or "blue book" tests. Yet many instructors admitted they relied on the all-objective type due to the pressure of large classes. As previously stated, combination-type tests could accommodate the needs of both instructor and student if they were more often employed.

Question 5

Comment on the practice of "academic grade inflation" (instructors grading students higher than their work warrants) which is reported to have occurred in recent years. Do you believe this has happened? If so, what are some of the reasons why this may have occurred? Have students' evaluations of their instructors been a factor? Comment.

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

The Broward respondents by more than an eighty-five percent ratio agreed that academic grade inflation had indeed occurred on that campus. Some instructors feared that student enrollments in their areas might drop and that higher minimum enrollments in each class were being mandated. Many spoke of administrative pressures to keep enrollment figures high at the college. Other important reasons included the influence of student evaluations of their instructors, the results of which might have an adverse affect on an instructor's status with the college. In order to improve their student evaluations, instructors said faculty members sometimes have emphasized their popularity with their students more than the fact that the students learn at acceptable levels. Others explained that instructors have been increasingly in competition to reduce student withdrawals from class. An instructor's "holding power" if high is recognized as a good accomplishment by the administration. Therefore, one instructor said, "Give 'em A's and B's and keep 'em!"

Some instructors said that many students are in college who should not be there, the community college philosophy not withstanding. They explained that these people simply did not have the motivation or background of a ninth grader, regardless of what methods the instructor could devise. Another spoke of "students of the TV, audio visual age, who are not taught in the public schools to read and write at acceptable levels," whose inadequacies hamper the learning process. He also spoke of student evaluations of instructors as an important factor influencing academic grade inflation. Another reason cited was "watered-down courses which adjust grades accordingly."

Another reason cited at Broward for academic grade inflation was the abandonment of requirements that students take certain general education courses which happen to have been in an instructor's specific discipline. It was pointed out that such changes in the curriculum have caused some faculty members to fear for their jobs, so they reduce the student workload required in their classes in order to make their courses more popular.

On the other hand, one respondent said that if academic grade inflation has occurred, it hasn't bothered him/her. This person said it was worthwhile to stress a student's achievement rather than his weaknesses. The respondent admitted that this approach might make it difficult to evaluate products of academic grade inflation, but then stated, "they always have the G.R.E. /Graduate Record Examinations/." The participant summed it up by saying, "Student evaluations of instructors are good if the form tests teacher effectiveness rather than punctuality."

One respondent criticized idealistic educators "who blame teachers for students' failures, seldom realizing that students themselves are the major reason for their own failures." He said that "politics and public relations are also involved--it doesn't look good if many individuals fail or don't graduate." Yet another person said that academic grade inflation makes it difficult on a teacher with professional standards and is also unfair to the student who thinks he is better prepared than he really is.

Still another participant claimed that certain innovative instructional methods, which claim that "education should be sold to the new generation as a pleasant, agreeable activity instead of as the old idea that the student should suffer to some degree to learn, were an influence." Finally, one participant said that the relaxed and less-punitive grading system adopted at Broward in recent years, which allows students to withdraw from a course without penalty almost until the final exam, is another factor in academic grade inflation.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

At Miami-Dade, as well as at Broward, most of the respondents agreed that academic grade inflation at that campus does exist and that it has many bad features. Several said that academic grade inflation developed partly as a result of administrative evaluation of an instructor's competence based on the relative number of students in his class who made passing grades. Some said that student evaluations of faculty members, when they are used by the administration as part of the annual evaluation process, has also contributed to the problem. Further, it was pointed out that administrative policy changes concerning the time when a student may drop a course before he is considered to have failed it have also had an influence on grade inflation. Students may now receive a "W" grade, which is non-punitive, almost up to the final exams. This in itself may not necessarily be a bad factor, however.

Another respondent said that the quality of work for each letter grade had suffered "because of administrators' charges of bigotry or poor community college spirit" if the instructor failed a student. He said that "an A by another name may really be a C."

Still another person placed a major part of the blame for academic grade inflation on ineffectual teaching of reading and writing skills in the public schools; others placed it on student evaluations of their instructors. Excessively liberal attitudes toward the underprivileged student and the writings of ultra-liberal "education professors" were some factors mentioned. Still other respondents spoke of faculty members' need to be popular. They mentioned that in the late 1960's the trend was started to raise grades to prevent students from being drafted into the army. One person blamed "flexible grading systems" and "performance contracting," which leave instructors with "fewer clear-cut judgments for standards of performance." He also said that in the community college, with its wide range of student abilities, instructors may have been inclined to lower overall standards to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared.

One participant blamed the problem on the "contingency hang-up this society has about success," and the "terrible unacceptability of failing"; also, on the desire of schools to make a "good image" for themselves. One respondent said that "grade inflation thrusts into our faces an unrealistic picture of estimated capacity and true accomplishment."

Many people at this campus spoke of teachers being intimidated by student evaluations, and of "administrators who were eager to maintain full classrooms." On the other hand, one participant said that grade inflation was partly the result of students' entering college with a greater degree of sophistication. He stated that grade inflation "was partly due to the fact that cheating has become a science." Still another respondent spoke of the difficulty that well-intentioned teachers in public schools have with large classes representing ethnic, religious and language differences, which are influential in causing varying levels of student achievement. To accommodate this problem, he said, instructors simply grade easier. Job security of teachers and "their tendency to blend in and not rock the boat" were other factors mentioned.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

At this campus perhaps only 80 percent, in contrast to even higher levels at Broward and Miami-Dade, felt that academic grade inflation had occurred; still, this is a high fiture. Of the many respondents at St. Petersburg who agreed that academic grade inflation exists on the campus, several said that it was partly due to instructors' "carrying favor" with students in order that teachers might in turn receive high student evaluations. One pointed out: "Many students nowadays are more or less undisciplined, especially in the area of study. As a result, they tend to drop subjects if they believe they will not be receiving a high enough grade." (Withdrawal from a course is now possible almost up to final exams under the less punitive grading system now in effect at St. Petersburg.) Sometimes, said one respondent, students will complain to the administration if they are not receiving high enough grades in a class. Rather than resist the problem, many instructors simply grade higher in order to preclude such possibilities. In previous years students rarely went to the administration under such circumstances; if they did, it rarely did them any good. He said that now things are different.

One respondent agreed very much that academic grade inflation does exist at St. Petersburg, pointing out that some students there "cannot read and write as well as my eleven-year-old daughter." It was also pointed out that declining enrollments at this campus and administrative pressures on the faculty in terms of equating student failure or withdrawal with instructor failure, were factors influencing academic grade inflation. However, another participant maintained that "the whole discussion about academic grade inflation is 'spurious'." This person said that the problem could be resolved simply by eliminating grades, and pointed out that "the whole grading process, as a small part of the credentialling process, is so shot through with teacher subjectivity that it comes to little more than academic impediments." Yet at least three other respondents maintained that grades are an important factor in the evaluation process.

Another respondent named teachers and ultimately school self-preservation as the main causes of academic grade inflation. This is an interesting remark, since of the five institutions studied, St. Petersburg is the one which is most threatened with declining enrollments. Still another participant placed a major portion of the blame on student evaluations of the instructor, saying: "I do not support student evaluations at all. While in theory they should be a valuable and useful guide, in practice they are unreliable and an influence on academic grade inflation." Many other respondents said the same thing.

One person pointed out that educational "experts" sometimes maintain that higher grades encourage students to do better academically, and that is why some instructors use grade inflation at St. Petersburg. He also said that certain other institutions, which are really concerned about the phenomenon of grade inflation, have solved the problem "by administering special tests to students which would somehow weed out those who managed to slip through. He felt that such a practice might be necessary in certain fields.

Another respondent said that other reasons for academic grade inflation were the changing nature of student populations (background, preparedness, interests, and ambitions), the knowledge explosion changing patterns of communication (T.V., etc.), changing cultural patterns, and rising expectations of blacks and the disadvantaged. He pointed out that "we all read less, and listen and watch more."

A final respondent said that academic grade inflation has been influenced by the fact that the college administration in recent times has impressed the faculty with the need to attract and hold students. He explained, "Numbers of 'drops' have been noted for various reasons by the academic dean." He went on to explain that the administration has said that this is a "students' market," and that "all students are educable." The idea put forth has been that "the instructor has only to discover the particular method (gimmick, package) that will "turn on" the student. The instructor at this college has been impressed with the fact that his job "may depend on the number of students who sign up for his/her classes."

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

At Manatee about 75 percent of the respondents agreed that academic grade inflation had occurred on this campus. One participant said that the need of some instructors to relate to the youth movement and the rise of student rights and protests may be factors influencing the phenomenon of academic grade inflation. Others spoke of students' evaluations of their instructors and of teachers' attempts to gain popularity with students as being factors. Still others spoke of "instructor laziness," the "nice-guy syndrome" and the idea that "high grades will give students confidence." Yet what bothered this respondent most concerning academic grade inflation was the fact that colleges were "turning students loose on the world who cannot perform at the minimum acceptable level."

On the other hand, one respondent said that he had not personally experienced the problem of academic grade inflation. For him the grading system was very similar to what it was twenty years ago. He maintained that entering college students today are better prepared and that this factor could result in higher grades. Another person disagreed with that position, pointing out that academic grade inflation was academically destructive. He quoted John Gardner, who has said: We must learn to honor excellence (demand it) in every socially acceptable human activity." Another participant claimed that academic grade inflation might be halted by performance-oriented education. Still another said that academic grade inflation has occurred "because our society has 'degree mania' as a part of social acceptance."

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

Virtually all of the Edison people agreed that academic grade inflation has indeed occurred. Some said it was because so many students are inadequately prepared for college work. Others said that there is much pressure on instructors to keep the F.T.E. (full time equivalent numbers of students) up and the attrition rate down. One respondent said instructors inflate grades in order to be assured of "classes that make."

On the other hand, another participant claimed that, in some instances, the use of specific behavioral objectives and course outlines has helped to take the guessing out of tests. He maintained that this practice has allowed students to achieve higher grades, which he claims is "higher achievement" rather than academic grade inflation. Still another respondent maintained that as a result of their administration's requiring the use of the behavioral objectives format in the classroom, he had had a difficult adjustment period in his teaching. He later realized that his great effort to be "fair" to his students resulted in overcompensation, so that many high grades, mostly A's, were given without his demanding complementary effort on the part of the students. He now believes that no grading system should "suddenly reward students who produce little effort in the learning process."

Another instructor at Edison said that academic grade inflation has resulted partly because instructors, for a number of reasons, seek large class enrollments as a sign of popularity. He also said that some teachers believe that high grades will cut down student frustrations, thus decreasing unrest on campus. He further pointed out that some faculty members believe that student evaluations are a threat to their job security and, therefore, give higher grades. Others, he said, are simply apathetic; it is easier to give high grades than to worry about possible consequences of giving lower ones.

A respondent at Edison said that while there has been academic grade inflation at that campus, the use of behavioral objectives, re-testing, and an almost no-fail grading system has established a setting in which students who perform can get A's and B's. While he favored this format, he said that established objectives have been set too low. He was also critical because a majority of his students have serious reading, writing or "analyzing" deficiencies. Therefore, he maintained, C and D students have succeeded in getting higher grades than they really should. He blamed pressure from "authority," the need for higher enrollments and behavioral objectives systems as prime factors contributing to academic grade inflation.

Still another instructor named political and state financial problems in Florida as important factors in Florida community colleges' academic grade inflation, as the colleges are influenced by the numbers of graduates produced, students in classes, and student "successes" as indicated by grades. He blamed student evaluations of their instructors as well as the writings of liberal educators in the field of community college education. A final respondent blamed publicized printouts of instructors' grade inflation and faculty fear of job loss if "F.T.E.'s" drop. Student evaluations of their instruct[illegible]er division institutions' reducing their academic [illegible]ards, and a "new type of faculty" were other reasons cited for influencing academic grade inflation.

Question 6

In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little. Do these adjustments threaten academic standards or goals? Comment.

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

There seems to be little doubt that the respondents at Broward Community College were very much concerned with the lowering of academic standards in recent years, not only at Broward but at community colleges in general. While two respondents did not think lowering of academic standards was a major problem, claiming that what is important is simply to "meet the needs of the students," most of the remainder did. One person in particular was so disturbed as to question the present American college standards (especially at the two-year institution), and to call for a return to the past, "when quality education and academic standards really meant something." Others, while not so extreme in their criticism, blamed college administrations, among others, for being more concerned with large enrollments, meaning greater state funding, than with quality education and standards. Most pointed out that the community college has gone much too far in its efforts to accommodate the underprepared student, an effort, they said, which has done much to reduce academic standards. While two respondents were concerned only with student "needs," and were little concerned with standards, another spoke of almost 60 percent of community college students being "functional illiterates." Most of the respondents asked for more cognitive learning, even if it meant less accommodation of the underprepared.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

At Miami-Dade, although most respondents deplored the lowered academic standards prevailing at that community college and at others, a substantial number did support efforts being made to accommodate the seriously underprepared students in special classes. Still, approximately half were unimpressed with the improvement made by such students in these special classes. Some spoke of the "I Division" courses but expressed unhappiness because underprepared students were not required to sign up for them. Several explained that the special or "Directed Studies" courses were being phased out in the future. At that time these students would simply be placed into regular classes where, ostensibly, special accommodations would be made for them. It was not indicated whether this change has occurred because of reduced funding or because the courses had not been successful in the opinion of the administration.

Several respondents did point out that there had been too much accommodation of seriously underprepared students and that this did indeed threaten academic standards. Two indicated that such standards were far too low. On the other hand, many respondents seemed fairly satisfied that accommodating underprepared students was a major job of the community college, and were not concerned about academic standards as such.

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

While none of the respondents believed that special programs for the underprepared threatened academic standards, several indicated that they had seen few successful results from these efforts. Two believed that such programs were helpful to the students taking them. Perhaps some did not quite understand the real thrust of the question, since they did not address themselves to the possibility that cognitive learning may be acquired at a lower level than in previous courses (for the seriously underprepared student) as "watered-down" and of limited benefit. Others claimed that general academic standards were being eroded because of excessive emphasis on underprepared students--perhaps more than on better prepared ones. On the other hand, two respondents said that still more should be done for the slow learner, especially in the area of English composition. Some participants criticized the administration for not requiring all seriously underprepared students to be placed in these special classes, as such students have an option to attend them. Since many chose standard courses, they have caused academic standards at the college to erode even further than their present low status.

While some respondents supported the concept of special classes for very underprepared students, others argued that too many of these students, who were often unwilling to put much effort into their studies, were contributing to lower academic standards--to the detriment of all. Many respondents felt that the administration should require greater effort from disinterested students; that "accommodation" had gone too far.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

At St. Petersburg Community College the majority of the respondents did not see too much accommodation of students as a threat to academic standards. Many supported special courses to help these students; others supported these years. Several respondents simply indicated the names of the courses offered for the underprepared rather than responding to their achievements. Still, as already noted, at least two were doubtful that the programs for the slow learners were accomplishing much, although they did not believe that they should be discarded.

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

At Edison Community College most of the respondents were unimpressed with the results of special classes for the underprepared. One said that much of this remedial effort should be done in the county school program rather than at the community college, while others pointed out that the heroic efforts of the college to accommodate the underprepared students have had a deleterious effect on academic standards. One respondent argued that far more should be done for the bright students; these were the ones who, after going to the university, returned to the community and made great contributions--partly as a result of the inexpensive educational opportunities afforded them at the community college.

A few respondents said that special programs for the underprepared could be useful, but that these courses should not offer academic credit, as was usually the case. They explained that students should remain in spcial classes until they had achieved at least at a minimal level. They believed that too many were simply "passed on" to regular classes while they were still seriously underprepared--especially in verbal abilities. Generally, these respondents believed that the above practices, among others, tended to lower standards at the community college.

Summary

Most of the respondents from the five community colleges in this study agreed that academic grade inflation was indeed a phenomenon that had reached their campuses. As indicated, numerous reasons were given, including the influence of college administrators, student evaluations of their instructors, high percentages of entering community college students who were seriously underprepared to do college work, fear of lowering enrollments, the influence of experts in the field of education who have played down the importance of grades and the more conventional goals of education, the general lowering of academic standards, the use of behavioral objectives, and myriad other factors. What is important to recognize is the near unanimity of the respondents who have recognized the fact that academic grade inflation has occurred, and the high percentage of instructors who agreed that academic standards are seriously being threatened.

On the other hand, there was a rather small minority of respondents, perhaps more at St. Petersburg Community College than elsewhere, who were either unaware of a problem of lowered academic standards or felt that if it did exist it was of little consequence. Perhaps as many as 85 to 90 percent of the participants were concerned about the problem, which they believed was eroding academic standards.

The above analyses of the data (much of which can be found in the Appendix of this study) to a large degree support many of the ideas and statements presented in Chapter II of this study, "Background and Review of the Literature." For example, a number of references mentioned in Chapter II criticized practices such as academic grade inflation; student evaluations of their instructors; unusually innovative teaching methods which may tend to reduce academic standards; excessive accommodation of underprepared students which may not encourage or require students to work at reasonable levels of achievement; and excessive use of objective tests at the expense of subjective or written ones. The latter practice does not require that students show their ability to analyze and organize information under test conditions.

Although analyses of the subjective responses may not have considered every response in detail, they were sufficiently comprehensive as to give a good picture of the participants' opinions and reactions to the topics under study. The chi-square analyses obtained from the computer printout, which are included in Appendix B, show the twelve statistically most significant p-value relationships (*p* .005) between the respective objective statements in Part I of the questionnaire.

The statistical tables representing the individual campuses under study (Appendix A) complement the text material by graphically representing the objective responses. Within the body of this paper (pages 92-93) a table is included which represents the averaged objective responses by campus. Appendix A includes in its five tables all of the numerical responses by campus.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Implications and Recommendations

Summary

The preceding findings represent, by means of two parts of a questionnaire, one objective and one subjective in nature, what selected and available faculty members at five South Florida community colleges believe are valid and invalid approaches in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

The findings of the present study clearly indicate that, on the average, perhaps three-fourths of the respondents at the five campuses under study believe that a more moderate approach to further innovative efforts in curriculum and instruction is needed. These respondents believe that in varying degrees the heroic efforts which many community colleges employ in dealing with underprepared students should be reduced. It appears that this negative response was not because they were opposed to innovation and change in curriculum and instruction per se; rather, they apparently believe that such programs should be more carefully tested before they are put into general use. The disappointing results of some innovative programs they have tried were a major reason for this negative response. For the supporters of these programs constantly to blame improper application of these innovative techniques for their failure is hardly the solution to the problem.

Most of the participants in this study disagreed that the prime aim of most community colleges was to accommodate the underprepared student. Also, approximately three-fourths indicated that community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have overemphasized accommodation at the expense of cognitive learning. Oral additions to this question indicated that the time may have come to call a halt to the continuance of reduced academic standards in the name of accommodating the underprepared. Some respondents said that a sizeable number of the underprepared students are simply unwilling or unable to put forth the effort that minimum college achievement demands. A few respondents disagreed with this position.

A majority of the respondents called for a reduced rate of more innovative programs. Apparently, for some people, the term "innovation" has a positive connotation, almost regardless of the type of innovation being considered. Yet the majority apparently have come to question some of these programs and many see a number of those already employed as a threat to academic standards and good education.

A sizeable majority of the instructors who participated in this study indicated by their objective statement responses that the trend toward reduced or altered general education course requirements for degree students is invalid. While their responses may have indicated the need for some relaxation in this area, the majority were definitely opposed to condoning increased numbers of elective courses at the expense of previously required ones. At Broward some people were opposed to the practice of allowing "esoteric" courses in English literature to substitute for a survey of literature course in satisfying the humanities requirement. At least three-fourths of the respondents saw a definite relationship between student evaluations of their instructors and academic grade inflation. A sizeable number were quite outspoken about this problem. Although there were a number of studies in the late 1960's and early 1970's which claimed that the influence of student evaluations of instructors on academic grade inflation was relatively minor, more recent studies have indicated that the effect is considerable. In any event, the participants of the present study were in agreement with the latter position.

The question concerning the state of Florida's recently introduced instructional accountability plan for higher education received mixed responses. Those supporting this development probably saw it as an effort to obtain better education; those opposing it may have done so because they believed it would introduce more "red tape" into the educational system than it would good educational procedures. Both positions have been supported in professional periodicals and in the press. It is possible that if more of the respondents believed that an accountability system could be devised at the state level which could really help to insure better education, more of them would have voted affirmatively on the statement. It is entirely possible that in the future such a format will be devised.

A very high majority of the respondents at all of the campuses strongly deplored the seriously declining college entrance examination scores as reported by the nation's two best-known testing services and widely written up in the press. The fact that the number of students now scoring high on the College Entrance Examination Boards has declined sharply in recent years was of serious concern to the respondents. This unhappy situation coincides with the declining Florida Twelfth Grade Test scores, which have been evident in the past few years. While this problem is derived directly from the public schools, it is also one of serious concern for the community colleges.

A sizeable majority of the participants favored structured teaching formats over non-structured ones. Yet most did not agree that educational "hardware" should take over the duties of the instructor in a few years so that he will become more of a "facilitator for learning" than an instructor as the term is presently understood. This would indicate that the participating instructors did not necessarily equate structured teaching formats with educational "hardware" or programmed instruction.

By close to a two-thirds majority the respondents did not agree that the trend of the future in community college education should include much more individualized instruction, which would allow students to study at their own rate in most classes. St. Petersburg voted in the affirmative on this question, but Broward, Miami-Dade and Edison disagreed by wide margins. Manatee took a middle position.

In reference to the first of the six subjective, open-ended questions, a majority of the respondents supported the use of the College Level Examination Program (C.L.E.P.), but most of the supporters asked for changes in its format. For example, a very substantial majority of the participants asked for a higher passing grade and a composition or essay part to be added to the objective section, especially for the English composition test. While the C.L.E.P. recently added an optional writing section to its English composition test, many community colleges, including Miami-Dade, where large numbers of students receive college credit through C.L.E.P., still do not require this part of the test; this information was verified by the Miami-Dade Testing Office. On the other hand, Broward now requires that students taking the C.L.E.P. in English composition include the writing sample format. It is interesting to note, according to its admissions office, that at Broward less than half of those passing the objective part of the English composition C.L.E.P. also succeed in the written part. This might also prove to be true at Miami-Dade if the written section of the test were required at that institution also. In any event, this information is a clear warning that a written part should be required for this examination at all institutions, and is an indication that the writing ability of community college students may be quite low. Ordinarily, only some of the academically superior students take these tests. If many of them cannot succeed in the composition section of the examination, the remaining students may prove to be even less successful in English composition--at least until they take a course at the community college level.

The respondents were rather mixed on their opinions of individualized instructional formats, although the majority were hesitant in supporting them except for special types of classes. Recognizing that there are greater differences among student abilities today than in earlier years because more people are attending college than ever before, the concept of individualized instruction at first glance appears to be a good one. Indeed, under some circumstances it may very well add to the learning opportunities of highly diverse student bodies. Some approaches to individualized instruction have included multiple tracking and ability grouping; interdisciplinary and student designed majors; programmed instruction and learning contracts; and alternate paths to meeting specific degree or competency requirements of individualized instruction. Others include independent study; directed reading, and individual or auto-tutorial techniques, including programmed instruction.[101]

In recent years so-called learning contracts have been employed at some institutions. These are written agreements or commitments between a student and a faculty member regarding a particular amount of student work, and the institutional reward or credit for his work.[102] While the proponents of learning contracts praise them for getting students involved in their individual learning program, they have a number of weaknesses. Some students become quite anxious and feel under pressure. They seek relief through performance in a competitive manner.[103] Also, contract learning has not brought the educational "drama" that some had predicted. Further, contract learning demands strong motivation by the student; also, while contracts allow for increased creativity, they neither insure nor create it. It is also possible that the individual curricular approach may cost much more than traditional curriculums, a real problem in a day of economic recession. While individual instructional formats have certain advantages in accommodating seriously underprepared, and, on occasion, superior students, their use on a large scale is debatable. In fact, this is the position which the majority of respondents took in this study. Perhaps three-fourths preferred the lecture-discussion format for the typical classroom situation, although a certain amount of individualized instruction for special classes, already noted, was supported.

As for the use of behavioral or learning objectives in the instructional process, the responses were again mixed. If the term "learning objectives" were to refer to broadly based objectives which would insure that a substantial part of the projected course were actually covered by the class, a majority of the respondents appeared to be supportive. On the other hand, if the term referred to a detailed, "mandated from above" type of format, a substantial majority were in opposition. At Broward, for example, few of the participants used learning objectives in the narrow sense, probably to some degree because Broward's administration has not required them. Moreover, at least three-fourths of the participants at Broward opposed their use in a formal sense, although many did support the general concept of objectives. On the other hand, at Miami-Dade and at Edison, where the administrations did require their use, their support was by considerably less than a majority. Some respondents, in supporting them, pointed out that behavioral objectives reduced the amount of marginal learning activities and non-structured class activity that often take place in some classes. Others said that behavioral objectives offered mechanized learning, and often took the human factor out of classroom activity. At St. Petersburg they received a majority support, while at Manatee, support for them was mixed.

The use of the lecture and of class discussion were still very much in evidence at the five community colleges under study. Although audio visual materials were also employed to some degree, perhaps as much as 75 percent of instructional time occupied the lecture-discussion format. Other methods such as individualized instruction and group dynamics were used, but only to a relatively small degree. Many participants supported the lecture-discussion because they felt that, in many ways, it was the most efficient and practical method to teach in most community college situations, where fairly large classes are the general rule. A sizeable number did concede that other formats are useful under special circumstances. While some writers in the community college field have been predicting the decline and even the demise of the lecture-discussion format, it is still very much in use by a strong majority of these respondents. A number of them indicated that they had at times tried alternate teaching techniques, including individualized instructional formats, but for the typical classroom situation they had found that the lecture-discussion method was best.

Almost all respondents on the five campuses maintained that there definitely has been an overuse of the objective test format in classroom tests. Many pointed out that this practice was mainly the result of having large numbers of students in their classes; that written tests required the instructor to spend too much time grading. Many admitted that most of the teachers on their campus, except perhaps those of English composition courses, used objective tests almost exclusively. Some did admit that a combination-type test of objective and subjective questions could give students training in writing and organizing substantive material and at the same time would not be too great a burden on the instructor who graded them. Perhaps only 30 percent of the test need be of the subjective or written format. Another plan might alternate tests between objective and subjective designs. If a campus administrator were to suggest this plan at a faculty meeting, with valid reasons for its implementation, it is possible that both an improved evaluation format and better education for students might result. This change might truly offer more "relevant" education, to use a popular word of the day. Employers have for a number of years deplored the writing and analytical skills of their college-educated employees. The above suggestion might help to improve this situation.

The problem of academic grade inflation has been widely publicized in the popular media. Most of the respondents were well aware of its existence, although a few either doubted it or said that even if it were prevalent, it was of little concern to them. The vast majority gave numerous reasons why this phenomenon has developed, not the least of which being the recently ubiquitous practice of student evaluations of their instructors. A number of people explained that instructors have been giving inflated grades in order to be well-evaluated in turn by their students.

Other reasons for academic grade inflation were that many community college students were underprepared, causing academic standards to decline; as a result, grade inflation had occurred. Another reason given was pressure from administrators on instructors to grade higher in order to reduce student withdrawals from classes. Many other reasons were stated to explain the phenomenon of academic grade inflation.

Finally, a solid majority of the respondents did agree that many adjustments made by community colleges to accommodate underprepared or unwilling students did indeed threaten academic standards. On the other hand, many approved of adjustments such as special classes for the seriously underprepared student, including individualized instruction of various types. Yet many respondents pointed out that adjustments have been employed to too great an extent in "typical" classes; that many instructors have graded students higher or reduced their class assignments in order to insure their teaching positions. A number of participants pointed out that when adjustments by the instructor are made which simply "water-down" academic standards and requirements, such a practice can be deleterious to both the college and students. When such adjustments are made in order to teach basic information in special classes to seriously underprepared students, they can be useful--provided that such classes really demand that these students apply themselves to their studies. Otherwise, these classes can simply be a "cop-out." Some respondents did say that they have rarely seen beneficial results from such classes; others simply said that they were in no position to judge their value but were willing "to give them a chance."

Implications

A United Press International article reports on "The Grade Crisis," explaining that there is a credibility crisis in the grades being passed out in the nation's colleges. It explains that grades go up as national test scores go down; a belief already noted above, and corroborated by many of the participants in this study. This news report says that A and B marks are increasingly common and that:

> Sometimes under pressure from students going over a teacher's head to the dean, C grades are changed to B and the D grade is rare; the F grade has practically disappeared. Puffed up grades at many schools do not honestly reflect a student's performance . . . . while colleges have been undergoing a period of inflating grades, scholastic aptitude scores on college entrance examinations have been going down.[105]

It is interesting to note that during the recent decade of declining college entrance scores, many of the newer and more innovative teaching methods have been widely employed in the public schools as well as in the community colleges. While there are other causes that may play an important part in these declining scores, radically innovative teaching techniques and curriculums, which have not been sufficiently proven, may well be an important factor. At least many of the respondents in this present study believe this to be true. Apparently there still is a wide gulf between some of the educational theorists and writers, who support radically innovative programs, and many of the practitioners, who attempt to use them. Again it must be pointed out, however, that a moderate amount of curriculum innovation for a changing world is in order, and some of this has been supported by many of the respondents. It is the degree and method of innovation that continue to fire the controversy.

In reviewing the literature on these topics in Chapter II, it was ascertained that a moderate amount of innovation is necessary in a changing world. Yet the majority of the writings referred to or quoted in this study maintained that curriculum and instructional changes that have been occurring at many community colleges in recent years may be too radical--at least in some important areas. The economic recession, which has reduced public funding for community colleges in many states, including Florida, may have had an impact on some highly innovative programs. Since many of these changes sometimes stress affective rather than cognitive learning, and interpersonal relationships rather than subject matter, it is possible that some legislators may have shown their disapproval by voting for relatively lowered funding for community colleges.

Many educators are sharply critical of legislators who are voting for reduced funding for education, including community colleges, in this day of recession. This criticism is understandable. However, the chaotic disciplinary conditions which exist in many public schools, which for years have been employing innovative formats such as open classrooms, all-objective testing, and televised classes, combined with drastically lowered student achievement scores, are not likely to induce legislators to vote for higher funding. Unwilling students, whether in the public schools or in community colleges, can be induced to become more interested in their studies only up to a certain level, regardless of pedagogical method. If excessive "accommodation" of these people continues to increase, with still more unproven methodology which is supposed to "change" them, it is possible that educational standards will continue to decline. Changing the standardized tests to accommodate the student will not solve the problem. The concept of salvaging underprepared, unwilling and disadvantaged students is a most commendable one and should be supported; yet there are limits to its effectiveness. Perhaps those limits have already been exceeded in some areas--if quality education is to be of prime consideration. For example, students in the community colleges who make little effort in their studies and have high class absence records should not be condoned. Unfortunately, many community colleges do little to correct this situation. While class attendance policies were not specifically included in the questionnaire, this problem was indicated in verbal discussions with some of the participants.

Kenneth B. Newell of Virginia Commonwealth University, writing in The Chronicle of Higher Education, says that what is needed is:

> an evaluation system that compensates for the variable advantage of high grades over low [concerning student evaluations of their instructors], a system in which statisticians relate to grades the evaluations submitted by students and calculate a modified average evaluation proportional to the relationship.[106]

Newell maintains that until such a system is developed and adopted, "teachers will continue to give higher grades for their own protection, and inflation will continue to soar."[107]

The present study recognizes the serious problems confronting community colleges, and the large numbers of ethnic, underprepared, and disadvantaged students with whom it must deal. Certainly many accommodations must be made under these circumstances--accommodations which were not so necessary a generation ago. Yet educators must not become so caught up with accommodating students that they lose their sense of perspective about what is and what is not good education. The problem is not simply one of accommodating underprepared students who, for whatever reason, do not put forth sufficient effort to succeed in their studies. It has also spread to the so-called "traditional student"--and on a large scale. Hence the serious decline in absolute numbers of students who now score above 700 and above 600 on the College Entrance Examination Board tests, and on the

Florida Twelfth Grade Examinations, cited above. The entire educational process may be in decline. Explaining away the problem by saying that lower college entrance scores are of little consequence in today's changing world, and that reduced ability to write the English language does not matter, as some educators have maintained, does not help to solve the problem. Not until there is greater emphasis on basic education and more stringent demands on students, both in the public schools and in the community colleges, will real headway be made. Open classrooms, objective testing, ethnic studies, interpersonal relationships, understanding diverse students, implementing more innovative instruction, individualized instruction, and learning contracts may all have some value in specific situations. However, these innovations and accommodations must not be so extensive as to weaken the educational process rather than strengthen it. Education includes a certain amount of basic, substantive knowledge and skill, effort on the part of the learner, and his preparation for a competitive world. The ability to obtain and use factual material is a major feature of education. The average student will not achieve these by means of more academic grade inflation and more liberal class attendance policies. Method, systems, and accommodation must not be substitutes for effort and academic achievement. This argument is especially valid by the time the student reaches the community college level in his studies.

William Raspberry, the noted black columnist of the Washington Post, cited above, deplores the practice of colleges' "passing" students who come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. He says:

> Few /colleges/ have been sufficiently "cruel" to flunk out large numbers of students whose academic backgrounds rendered them incapable of handling college work, and still fewer have been "mean" enough to force their low-income students to spend an extra one or two years tuition to make up for their educational shortfall. Too often, they try to achieve academic excellence by declaration, leaving their graduates to blame it on "racism" when they find themselves unable to compete in the real world.[108]

Since so much criticism of certain innovative teaching and curricular techniques has been appearing for a considerable amount of time in the popular media and elsewhere, it might be good for educators to heed some of this "advice of the people" and to put it into practice. Indeed, this plan is already being implemented in a number of public school systems throughout the country, including Dade and Broward counties in South Florida, the scene of this study. Both school systems are soon to start pilot basic education programs for a few of their schools. These will be voluntary in that both teachers and students may request that they be included in the experiment. Under the Dade County format:

> Students will be expected to keep quiet, be neat, courteous, line up quickly, use good table manners, do homework and get to school on time . . . . Students will work for better grades and won't be promoted until they pass. They will study in self-contained classrooms under one teacher.

> Tyler's plan /a Dade School Board member/ was a rejection of open classrooms, team teaching, non-graded programs and other innovations for "those students who feel the need for a more structured learning environment." He called his approach an experiment to halt declining Dade reading and math achievement test scores. He urged that a special staff committee be set up to evaluate the "basic skills" schools.[109]

The results of the above plan for Dade County, Florida, which is similar to one now being introduced into Broward County, should eventually have an effect on both Miami-Dade and Broward Community Colleges. Reports of excellent results from newly established "basic schools" in Pasadena, California and elsewhere have already been reported. While the "wave of the future" will undoubtedly include continuing curriculum and instruction change to some degree, it may also include a greater emphasis on what often have been considered traditional education "basic skills." Alternate schools to accommodate students who prefer different approaches to education may be part of the answer. In any event, something must be done to improve the quality and academic standards of our public schools and community colleges, and the answer is not necessarily a financial one. Textbook companies reporting that on numerous occasions they have been forced to downgrade the reading level of their first-year college textbooks from the twelfth grade to the ninth grade (due to the inability of college students to comprehend at the higher level) some thinking people are beginning to believe that higher education's problems are reaching crisis proportions.[110] The principle impetus for the lowered reading level for textbooks, incidentally, has been the community college.[111]

The findings in the present study indicate that the majority of the teachers who were queried was concerned about declining academic standards at the community college level. Innovation at the community college may still be of benefit, but there probably should be a reduction in the rate of introducing more innovative programs of the type so much in fashion in recent years. Change should include a combination of more basic education and substantive education, together with some of the best innovative procedures. Educational "hardware" can be useful, for example, but the machine should not be allowed to negate the all-important human factor in the teaching process. For example, computer-graded tests can be used profitably so long as classroom testing also includes a generous amount of instructor-graded written material. Accommodation for the underprepared student should certainly be made; but this should not allow people falling into this category to come to class at will and to make only a half-hearted effort to study. It should be realized by now that not all people have the interest or ability to undertake college level or even remedial studies of a meaningful type. The argument that virtually every American citizen should be offered a community college education if he wants one is sound. That everyone should actually attend such an institution, regardless of his desire and will to study, is not a valid position. No teaching methodologies, regardless of their innovative concepts, can make the college experience worthwhile to the unwilling student. In this period of history, when college graduates in large numbers are unable to find jobs suitable to their education, alternate approaches to the college experience may be a better plan for many people not willing to put forth the effort required in academic pursuits. Non-degree and on-the-job training programs may be better for them. Cooperative education programs may be the answer for some people; yet these and other programs should not be of degree-granting status unless they truly represent a commitment to study. Apprenticeship programs of various types for many young people may be more valid than degree-granting studies.

Legislatures, including Florida's, are reducing the percentage of state funding going into higher education and into community colleges in particular. Legislators hear about high school and even college students who can read and write at only fifth and sixth grade levels of ability. At the same time they know that vast sums are being spent on education, and that there was a time when this problem, under somewhat different circumstances, was far less serious. As already mentioned, while there are other possible reasons for the present situation, many lawmakers are becoming critical of some of the above mentioned curriculum and instructional approaches, which have promised far more than they have delivered. Basic learning skills and a disciplined mind are as important today, if not moreso, than in previous decades. An editorial in the Miami Herald, "Higher Education, Lower Quality?," explains the problem succinctly in saying:

> As the Regents [Florida Board of] begin to face up to basic problems, the issue of "quality versus quantity" should be high on the agenda. And if inadequate state funding forces a choice, we hope the Board opts for quality, even at the cost of limiting access to college.
>
> The state and the university system do no one a favor by cramming college classrooms with academically unqualified, semi-literate students whose sheer persistence is eventually rewarded with a diploma so devalued that it signifies nothing.[112]

Both outgoing Florida State University Chancellor Robert Mautz and incoming Chancellor E. T. York in the same article back up the above position.[113]

Recommendations

Perhaps the day has arrived when community colleges should stress quality education in fact and not just as a slogan. This does not, as already noted, necessarily mean further expenditures of state and local monies. Unless academic standards are raised at the community college level, the value of the college degree will continue to decline. Certainly a community college is not a selective liberal arts college and should not try to be one. Yet it should still have academic standards which are more concerned with producing an educated and trained citizenry than simply in "accommodating" everyone at the lowest common denominator. Unless academic standards are raised to a reasonable level of achievement, the underprepared and disinterested student will continue to drag down the academic climate of the entire institution. This does not apply, of course, to courses not offered for academic credit. K. Patricia Cross has said, as noted above, that the community college's function is not to simply put credentials into the hands of the underprepared student; this would be a disservice both to the student and to the institution.

What is suggested from the present study are moderate changes in the community college curriculum and instructional formats, not a drastic overhaul of the entire structure. The community college has contributed to a great deal to American education; let this contribution be even greater in years to come. In recent years it has not reached its full potential, to some degree because of the reasons cited in this study. Community college courses which are offered for college credit should stand for something. Doing away with grades will not solve the problem. Doing away with competition in college does not preclude it in one's post-collegiate activities.

The above study could be a model for a much more comprehensive one of statewide scope, which might include all departments of each institution studied. An additional question to be considered in a larger study might ask if the community college sometimes makes too strenuous an effort to recruit underprepared students for its college level programs. Still another might ask if the liberal class attendance policies at many community colleges should be made more stringent, especially in this day of non-punitive grading. It might further be asked if liberal attendance policies reduce academic achievement, which is often compensated for by instructors who give passing grades to almost all students as a result of what they believe is administrative pressure to do so.

The above findings and recommendations do not necessarily maintain that there be a downgrading of affective learning in favor of cognitive learning at the community college. Interpersonal relationships and learning to live in society are valid aims for higher education. Yet the prime purpose of attending college is to obtain an education. Substantive learning in preparation for professional and career education must not be allowed to decline as a result of an overemphasis on affective learning or on accommodating students who are unwilling to put forth a minimum amount of effort. Encounter groups and group dynamics may, under certain circumstances, have a favorable effect on an individual's personality and well being, but they are not in themselves a substitute for education.

Finally, it should be pointed out that not all of the respondents agreed with the major findings of the study. More of the respondents at St. Petersburg supported innovative instruction and accommodation at the present rate of increase than did those on the other four campuses. Even at St. Petersburg, however, the overall responses to these questions were mixed. At the other campuses, especially at Broward, Miami-Dade and Edison, there was a clear call for a reduced rate of more innovative teaching and curricular adjustments, and a strong call for more substantive learning and basic educational skills.

While it is true that a number of community college students who transfer to four-year colleges and universities appear to do reasonably well in their studies at the upper division institutions, this does not tell the entire story. Conversations with several faculty members and a dean at Florida State University indicate that at that institution, for example, academic standards have been lowered in the past several years to accommodate the students now entering from both secondary schools and the community colleges. This information coincides with the Miami Herald editorial quoted above, "Higher Education, Lower Quality?."

Basic academic skills, such as the ability to learn substantive material and to write examinations and papers, were perhaps the most critical weaknesses in college students' education today. Former students at Broward who have transferred to a four-year institution have repeatedly told this writer that the community college does not demand nearly enough academically in preparing them for the university, although a number of them did say that some of their community college instructors were fine teachers and sometimes more concerned with student welfare than many of their university counterparts. Community college faculty members too often reduce academic standards in their classes in order to become more popular with students, and to compete with their colleagues for more students. Perhaps faculty members of all departments should cooperatively set up guidelines so that certain minimum academic standards for all classes are upheld.

The findings of this study will be presented to the Broward Community College administration, including academic deans, division chairpersons, department heads, and faculty. Further, a summary of these findings will be presented to the administrations of the other four South Florida community colleges which participated in this Major Applied Research Project, as well as to each of the cooperating faculty members who helped to make this study possible.

A copy of this study will be sent to ERIC, The Community College Clearinghouse, where, it is hoped, it will be read by many community college administrators and faculty members, and other interested persons.

In recent months some of the findings of the above study have been presented to the Community College Social

Science Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, and to the Florida Political Science Association, meeting in Gainsville, Florida. In both instances the presentations were enthusiastically received, and were the bases for much serious discussion. Also, shorter papers, in the form of practicums, based on some of the above material, have already been published in _ERIC_, _The Community College Clearinghouse_, (March and May, 1975) and in _Improving College and University Teaching Yearbook_ (1975), published by the Oregon State University Press. Still another article appears in the _Community College Social Science Quarterly_ (Winter, 1975).

A follow-up investigation (within two years) is planned at Broward Community College to ascertain the effect which this study may have had at that institution in the areas of curriculum and instruction. The format for such a study will ask how the present investigation helped to influence administrators' and faculty members' viewpoints on topics such as evaluation, curriculum, instruction and the like. Other questions and topics, yet to be devised, will be included in the follow-up study.

In the last analysis, community colleges as well as public four-year institutions will upgrade themselves only when the people, through their legislators, call for improved academic standards and curricular and instructional formats. The powers of college administrators and academic boards are limited; they are eventually responsible to the representatives of the people and to the people themselves. In recent months there does seem to be an impetus from the press for change of the nature indicated in this study. In a democratic society activity of this kind often develops slowly; in this instance it cannot come too soon. In many respects the comunity college has been doing a good job in trying to teach people of varied abilities, interests, ambitions, and backgrounds. It can do an even better one if some of the findings and suggestions made in this study are examined and considered for possible implementation.

LIST OF FOOTNOTES

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[83] _Ibid_., p. 163.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Tables of the Responses to the Ten Objective Statements to Part I of the Instrument (by Institution)

Responses Are Indicated Vertically
Statements Are Indicated Horizontally

Key to Scaled Objective Responses

strongly agree	5
agree	4
undecided	3
disagree	2
strongly disagree	1

Broward Community College (Central Campus)
(20 Respondents)

Statements

Respondents (1-20)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	2	1	4	4	1	4	1	2
2	4	4	4	5	2	5	5	5	2	3
3	1	2	5	2	4	1	5	4	2	1
4	2	1	5	4	5	3	5	4	2	2
5	5	5	2	4	1	2	2	1	5	5
6	2	2	4	2	4	5	4	4	2	2
7	1	4	5	1	4	4	5	4	2	2
8	2	2	5	2	4	3	5	4	1	2
9	4	5	2	3	2	2	4	1	4	5
10	1	2	5	1	2	3	5	5	1	2
11	4	5	2	4	1	2	1	2	4	5
12	1	2	5	2	4	4	5	2	2	2
13	2	4	5	2	3	2	4	4	2	2
14	3	4	3	4	2	3	4	5	3	5
15	2	2	5	1	2	5	5	4	4	2
16	3	5	1	2	4	4	3	2	3	4
17	2	1	4	2	5	5	5	3	3	2
18	2	2	5	5	2	2	2	1	2	4
19	1	1	5	1	5	1	5	5	1	1
20	2	2	2	3	4	4	3	2	2	3

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)
(20 Respondents)

Statements

Respondents (1-20)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	2	5	1	4	1	4	5	1	2
2	2	4	4	4	2	4	4	2	1	2
3	2	4	5	2	2	4	3	4	2	2
4	4	5	4	4	3	2	3	4	5	4
5	2	4	4	4	3	2	5	4	5	4
6	2	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	2	2
7	1	2	5	2	4	4	1	5	2	4
8	1	1	5	1	4	4	5	5	1	5
9	4	2	4	2	2	3	2	4	2	3
10	1	2	2	4	4	4	5	3	1	1
11	4	2	2	1	4	3	5	4	2	2
12	1	1	4	2	2	4	4	5	1	2
13	4	2	4	4	4	1	5	5	1	2
14	2	5	5	2	5	4	5	4	4	4
15	2	2	3	2	2	4	5	2	2	4
16	4	1	4	1	4	3	5	5	1	2
17	2	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	1	2
18	1	2	3	2	2	4	2	2	4	4
19	1	5	4	2	2	4	2	1	4	5
20	2	2	5	2	4	4	5	4	2	2

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)
(12 Respondents)

Statements

Respondents (1-12)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	4	5	2	2	2	4	2	1	4	4
2	1	5	1	5	2	3	1	4	5	5
3	2	4	4	5	4	4	4	2	4	5
4	2	5	4	5	2	4	5	5	3	3
5	2	5	4	4	2	4	5	4	1	5
6	2	5	4	5	2	2	5	4	2	4
7	4	4	5	2	4	2	5	1	4	4
8	2	5	4	2	1	4	4	3	4	2
9	4	5	1	4	1	5	1	4	4	4
10	4	5	4	4	2	5	4	2	4	5
11	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	2
12	2	2	4	4	4	5	4	4	2	2

Manatee Community College
(12 Respondents)

Statements

Respondents (1-12)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	5	1	1	1	5	5	2	1	5
2	2	4	5	2	2	2	4	4	2	4
3	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	3
4	2	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	2	2
5	2	2	1	1	5	4	4	4	4	2
6	1	4	3	2	2	5	3	3	4	2
7	2	4	4	4	1	5	3	4	2	4
8	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	4
9	1	3	2	3	1	5	3	4	4	4
10	1	1	5	2	5	3	5	4	2	2
11	1	2	4	2	5	4	5	4	1	2
12	2	2	4	1	4	4	4	5	2	3

Edison Community College
(10 Respondents)

Statements

Respondents (1-10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	2	4
2	1	4	5	2	2	4	5	3	1	2
3	1	3	4	2	4	3	5	3	2	2
4	3	4	5	1	5	3	4	2	2	3
5	1	2	5	1	4	1	5	3	1	4
6	4	4	3	4	2	1	3	2	3	4
7	2	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	2	2
8	2	4	4	2	4	2	4	4	4	2
9	2	2	4	2	4	3	5	4	1	1
10	1	2	5	1	1	1	4	5	1	3

APPENDIX B

Contingency Tables of Responses
To Objective Statements With High
Chi-Square Values ($p < .001$)

Question 1 (Row) Versus Question 4 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	10	5	15
Disagree	14	39	53
Total	24	44	68

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	5	10	15
Disagree	19	34	53
Total	24	44	68

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 8.2943
Probability of Chi-Square = .0044

Question 1 (Row) Versus Question 6 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	4	9	13
Disagree	37	10	47
Total	41	19	60

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	9	4	13
Disagree	32	15	47
Total	41	19	60

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 10.8220
Probability of Chi-Square = .0014

Question 1 (Row) Versus Question 10 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	11	3	14
Disagree	17	33	50
Total	28	36	64

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	6	8	14
Disagree	22	28	50
Total	28	36	64

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 8.8294
Probability of Chi-Square = .0034

Question 2 (Row) Versus Question 5 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	11	23	34
Disagree	25	9	34
Total	36	32	68

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	18	16	34
Disagree	18	16	34
Total	36	32	68

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 11.5694
Probability of Chi-Square = .0011

Question 2 (Row) Versus Question 9 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	18	16	34
Disagree	3	29	32
Total	21	45	66

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	11	23	34
Disagree	10	22	32
Total	21	45	66

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 14.4225
Probability of Chi-Square = .0004

Question 2 (Row) Versus Question 10 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	22	11	33
Disagree	7	23	30
Total	29	34	63

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	15	18	33
Disagree	14	16	30
Total	29	34	63

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 11.8780
Probability of Chi-Square = .0009

Question 3 (Row) Versus Question 7 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	46	4	50
Disagree	6	6	12
Total	52	10	62

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	42	8	50
Disagree	10	2	12
Total	52	10	62

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 12.6194
Probability of Chi-Square = .0007

Question 4 (Row) Versus Question 10 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	15	8	23
Disagree	13	28	41
Total	28	36	64

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	10	13	23
Disagree	18	23	41
Total	28	36	64

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 6.7233
Probability of Chi-Square = .0095

Question 5 (Row) Versus Question 7 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	33	2	35
Disagree	19	9	28
Total	52	11	63

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	29	6	35
Disagree	23	5	28
Total	52	11	63

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 7.5391
Probability of Chi-Square = .0063

Question 5 (Row) Versus Question 10 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	8	26	34
Disagree	20	9	29
Total	28	35	63

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	15	19	34
Disagree	13	16	29
Total	28	35	63

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 13.0856
Probability of Chi-Square = .0006

Question 7 (Row) Versus Question 10 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	16	32	48
Disagree	9	1	10
Total	25	33	58

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	21	27	48
Disagree	4	6	10
Total	25	33	58

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 10.8360
Probability of Chi-Square = .0014

Question 8 (Row) Versus Question 10 (Column)

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	15	28	43
Disagree	14	2	16
Total	29	30	59

Observable Values

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	21	22	43
Disagree	8	8	16
Total	29	30	59

Expected Values

Chi-Square = 12.9170
Probability of Chi-Square = .0006

APPENDIX C

Representative Sampling of the Subjective Responses to the Six Open-Ended Questions of Part II of the Questionnaire

(Some responses have been omitted or occasionally abridged because of redundancy, overly long answers and space limitations.)

Question 1

Do you believe that the use of the College Level Examination Program (C.L.E.P.), which often allows a student to pre-empt a course if he scores at least in the 50th percentile, is a proper substitute for taking a course? Should the percentile requirement for passing be higher? Should some subjective or written responses also be mandatory as well as the objective ones now required?

Responses

Broward Community College (Central Campus)

(a) No. In addition to the percentile needing to be higher, objective tests indicate recognition without application. Subjective and written responses would better reveal how well a student's thought processes can apply a given set of data-solving problems, for instance.

(b) It would, of course, be nonsense to require a student to take a course, the content of which he has already mastered (hence placement tests, C.L.E.P., etc.). I see no objection to allowing a student to "test out" of a course. But must we grant credit for it? In MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) we have students who skip the first year courses because they have had two years of a foreign language in high school, but they get no credit for the exemption. Certainly written answers should be required in a course whose objective is to write clearly (e.g. English 101).

(c) The percentile of 50 is too low and written work should be required. Also, the test should reflect the course being pre-empted.

(d) This type of test should be avoided at all cost. Of course I believe there should be written answers and oral. But many [students] can neither write nor talk.

(e) The percentage for passing should be raised and there should be some subjective material (written) required. Objective tests mainly test recall--more than that is needed to understand a subject so that credit can be received.

(f) The C.L.E.P. test passing grade should be raised to 70% and should include some written as well as objective responses.

(g) Some subjective or written responses should be mandatory for C.L.E.P.

(h) The C.L.E.P. percentile is o.k. but let's have some essay--especially in the non-physical science areas.

(i) I do not believe C.L.E.P. is a proper substitute for taking a course. I believe the C.L.E.P. exams should be eliminated.

(j) C.L.E.P. is not and cannot be a satisfactory substitute for actually taking the course in some disciplines. The fiftieth percentile is too low for passing. While requiring some written work in lieu of all objective work is certainly desirable, it is not perhaps very feasible. We live in a computer age and the administration of C.L.E.P. might become too cumbersome. I would recommend requirements or perhaps even total discontinuance.

(k) I think C.L.E.P. is a good idea. However, I was unaware that the 50th percentile was acceptable. I would definitely opt for 75% instead. Written responses would not be necessary provided objective questions are designed.

(l) The percentile should be at least 70%. Also, some subjective or written responses should be mandatory.

(m) I firmly believe in the C.L.E.P. test. But that percentile should be raised to about 70%. I understand that the institution can choose its own figure. I don't believe that subjective or written responses are necessary. Considering that most instructors do not come close to finishing the course material, a 70% response on a C.L.E.P. test would be entirely adequate. This would free a student to take advanced history courses or follow other interests. I'm firmly opposed to locking students into a class to create jobs for instructors. These comments apply only to basic courses.

(n) I think C.L.E.P. is satisfactory now. I see no reason for taking a course unless the student demonstrates that he doesn't grasp the material covered in that course. Subjective or written responses become cumbersome in a large school system and are scored too subjectively. No two papers are scored identically. I think the present system works--if not perfectly.

(o) C.L.E.P. is a good idea--if (a) the passing requirement is raised to, say, 75% and (b) a written part (at least 25% of the test) is included to test the student's ability to communicate correctly and effectively in his native language. As C.L.E.P. is now, it's a ridiculous gift to the student.

(p) For some courses C.L.E.P. may be all right: typing, phases of nursing, music, physical exercises and, perhaps, even foreign languages. But for history, English, mathematics the score should be much higher. At least some written material (up to 75 responses, perhaps) should be a part of the test.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)

(a) I do not believe the C.L.E.P. test for freshman composition is a valid representation of what a student needs to learn in a composition course. Thus I do not think that passing such a test at the 50th percentile is a substitute for taking the course. Either the "passing score" should be raised and written material be required, or the whole thing should be dropped.

(b) I do not think the C.L.E.P. test is a proper substitute for taking a course, particularly one in English composition. I thought that the original purpose of the C.L.E.P. test was to provide the mature student, long out of high school, a way of translating his experience into credits. I think using it to give credit to high school graduates is a kind of vitiation of its purpose. I think the passing percentile should be higher. At one time it was the 75th percentile at the University of Florida. I prefer that the present figure be raised or the test not be used at all. I do not know how subjective or written responses could be used or made mandatory.

(c) It depends on the course. For courses abundant with cognitive input, C.L.E.P. is fine. However, for courses having to do with process, such as human relations, the idea of giving credit or C.L.E.P. is absured.

(d) I believe in the use of C.L.E.P. The requirement for passing might be higher--in the normal range of about 75% and up.

(e) The C.L.E.P. test is a good idea for a "skills" course such as math, but for freshman English it should be abolished. Too many things not readily measurable take place in the classroom. Writing several themes and exchanging ideas with other students is essential to freshman composition.

(f) No, the 50th percentile or near it is not sufficient, in my opinion; it should be raised to about 65%. I feel it would have a more valid test if it did include several essay questions--perhaps a choice of three out of six for purposes of revealing how capable the student at this level is in expressing him/herself.

(g) The C.L.E.P. test is not a valid substitute for taking a course. The student's background should be evaluated by the appropriate faculty member. If the student is deemed to have an adequate background, a written, subjective test should be administered to determine his grade for the course.

(h) The percentile score of 50 on the C.L.E.P. test reflects D level competency, which is passing. Pass-fail grades do not indicate the level of competency and thus are often not transferable. I believe that if several courses are permitted under C.L.E.P., the competency level should be C. I believe some C.L.E.P. tests do have mandatory written responses. This is essential in an area such as English composition. Where the institution requires essay tests or term papers for course work, I believe they should be able to insist upon written responses in the C.L.E.P. tests.

(i) Nothing could replace the classroom experience. However, C.L.E.P. is a workable alternative. Yes, the percentile should be considerably higher--75. While more difficult to grade, any sort of written response would show depth of knowledge as opposed to knowledge per se.

(j) A C.L.E.P. test is not a substitute for education. A basic ingredient is lacking--faculty-student relations. Rather than broaden its use by adding additional subjective or written responses, I would limit and restrict the C.L.E.P. test to cases where students, having had a fruitful maturing process, are now in need of accelerated studies.

2

(k) C.L.E.P. is not a proper substitute for a course as C.L.E.P. now stands. The percentage required based on a multiple-choice exam is of no consequence. It should be an essay exam administered by the academic departments.

(l) From what I know of the [C.L.E.P.] test, the score requirements are too low as a substitute for the course or courses being pre-empted. Often the C.L.E.P. tests are rather far removed from the objectives of the courses being pre-empted. Probably some written responses should be required, but that is the least important factor as often the courses being pre-empted are tested by objective tests only!

(m) C.L.E.P. test requirements are too low. They cheapen the quality and intent of the academic procedure.

(n) The C.L.E.P. test does not measure the student's ability to write an English sentence. One of my students last term had failed English three times at the University of Miami and was making two D's here with two different instructors in two courses. He "clepped" the courses. The C.L.E.P. is not a substitute for the experience of taking the classes.

(o) The C.L.E.P. test is not a valid substitute for taking a course. The student's background should be evaluated by the appropriate faculty members. If the student is deemed to have an adequate background, a written, subjective test should be administered to determine his grade for the course.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)

(a) It depends on the course. For a basic math or English course the C.L.E.P. test at the 75th percentile seems appropriate if some subjective or written responses are required for the English course. Probably any introductory Social science or humanities course could profitably be "Clepped" (!) if the test were adequately devised, the percentile requirement for passing were higher, and written responses were included. But I don't believe there should be C.L.E.P. tests in courses where class participation leads to new insights or where there is a possibility of real intellect or personal growth.

(b) I do not see the C.L.E.P. test in terms of a "substitute for taking a course," whether proper or improper. I see it as an indicator of the probable value of the course to the student. I feel that it works reasonably well, is certaily to the advantage of students, and admits the possibility that the 75% of life spent outside of school might have some educational value.

(c) I do believe that the C.L.E.P. is a proper substitute for taking a course. I would like to see the percentile requirement raised to the 75th percentile, however. I do not believe that it is necessary to have subjective or written responses as part of C.L.E.P. Who would have time to read all of these? Besides, if the percentile were raised, as I suggested, the need for the written responses might be obviated. Let's try that approach first.

(d) No--it is not a proper substitute for taking a course. It should have a higher percentile and include some written material.

(e) I have no objections to C.L.E.P. at the 50th percentile. Of course, it may not be a substitute for taking a course, say in composition; but let's free up the student to get into the work he wants to get into. He can always come back and take a mini-unit in something he finds he needs in the future. No new responses are needed.

(f) Absolutely not--regarding performance courses such as freshman English. The C.L.E.P. test involves "decoding," so to speak, while course work involves "encoding"--two different processes. Regarding "content" courses, 50% is far too low. Further, the C.L.E.P. test for "content" courses should contain an essay question worth 25% of the test score, with "passing" being determined by a student's having achieved at least 85% of the "objective" section and at least 80% of the "essay" section.

(g) I believe C.L.E.P.-ing "elementary" courses is permissable, but I definitely think that a score at the 50th percentile is too low (recommend at least 75). I also believe there should be some subjective or written responses as well as objective ones, especially in English.

(h) Percentile not high enough. There should be subjective material in the test. The test as it is is not a proper substitute as credit for a course.

(i) I do not believe the C.L.E.P. test and its present use are justified. First, paper and pencil tests that put their emphasis on facts and skills should be downplayed by every educator. Also, testing out of a course can be much better handled if the instructor or institution devises its own learning system for each course, providing for instruction, testing and progress at the student's pace. The change of the percentile would not affect my views, nor would the inclusion of subjective or written responses.

Manatee Community College

(a) Yes, I am in favor of C.L.E.P. Research has consistently shown that the majority of those "C.L.E.P.ing" courses are in the upper 25% anyway and go on to pass, equally high, more advanced courses. But the percentile on C.L.E.P. should be raised.

(b) I have mixed emotions regarding the C.L.E.P. credit. As the parent of two children in college at the same time, the financial benefits derived via the C.L.E.P. test is appealing. As a teacher of the English language, I fear that the C.L.E.P. test credit often denies the student the opportunity to learn specific, efficient techniques for developing research papers which will be required of him in many academic areas and, therefore, renders an injustice to the student. Furthermore, I sense that a student who has "Clepped" most of his freshman year, particularly if he is a freshman student at a major university, is meted out a more difficult adjustment period from the standpoint of emotional and mental sets than he would have had under normal circumstances, since he is expected to operate academically at the sophomore or junior levels sags the benefits of freshman course experience.

(c) I believe that the C.L.E.P. test is a "proper" substitute for courses which primarily emphasize recall and understanding of factual knowledge. I think that the 50th percentile is an adequate score for credit. I do not think that subjective or written responses should be mandatory.

(d) The norms are appropriate (50th percentile). I do believe some written responses would be appropriate, particularly for the English exam. The current test does not in any way measure the student's ability to communicate effectively in written form.

(e) Am for C.L.E.P. with some reservations. The percentile requirements are probably reasonable. If applied communications skills and cognitive abilities could be measured against some common standards. I believe it would be helpful to have subjective, written responses included.

(f) I do believe the C.L.E.P. requirement is far too low and is not a substitute for taking a course. I've had "C.L.E.P. students" who were unable to handle the next course sequence--quite a number of times.

(g) Yes, it is a proper substitute for the general education requirement. No, the percentile should not be higher. No subjective evaluation should be required.

Edison Community College

(a) Yes, C.L.E.P. is an acceptable alternative as a means of acquiring credit for the student who is capable of demonstrating proficiency equal to or better than what would be earned from classroom experience. C.L.E.P. is best suited to skill courses or to those that are highly factual in content. The percentile requirement should be considerably higher than the 50th. I feel very strongly that written responses should be mandatory.

(b) (a) I think the C.L.E.P. is a good test.
(b) The score might be raised to 60th percentile.
(c) No, the subjective answers would be too time consuming.

(c) No--I am against the C.L.E.P. test. Because I believe college should set attitudinal or emotional tones and these get by--passed in C.L.E.P. Society is not just facts. Studies are needed to see what kind of student we are turning out with C.L.E.P. exams. I don't know about higher percentiles. Subjective and written responses are a possibility.

(d) Logically, the C.L.E.P. program ought to be a perfect substitute for the taking of a course. This would be true if one assumed that the only reason for taking a required course would be to learn some facts concerning a particular subject, which could be measured objectively. Of course, anyone who teaches knows that this is a false assumption. The validity of studying any subject also depends upon the student learning to see relationships, to think, to have the personal experience of hearing a creative instructor or becoming involved in lively class discussions, etc. The C.L.E.P. test does not do this, of course. The percentile requirement should definitely be higher and there should be a limit to the number of courses which can be exempted for the student to be considered educated. It would be more desirable for the student to have some written responses required if a qualified person would be grading it.

(e) In my opinion the use of C.L.E.P. test scores, which allow credit for scores in the 50th percentile, is academically dishonest. In my opinion no score under the 75th percentile should be accepted. Further, I would allow only subject matter tests but not general ones to be used for pre-empting purposes.

(f) I regard C.L.E.P. tests as suitable substitutes for courses to establish proficiency in certain fields. Criteria for passing should be the 60th percentile rather than the 50th. Some written responses should be required on C.L.E.P. tests in the social sciences. These should carry a weight of 25% of the total.

(g) Generally I do not think the C.L.E.P. test is a proper substitute for taking a course. Specifically, if a person's background and experiences have gotten him far more knowledge and expertise than is tested for on the C.L.E.P., then I think the C.L.E.P. is a beneficial device for assisting the person in not having to prove himself in a full course. To prevent a person from "lucking out" or just skimming through, I believe the percentile passing requirement should be much higher, say 80%. I am not familiar with C.L.E.P. test forms, but I would say that if they do not already include subjective or written answers, then they should be mandatorially required. Objective testing simply does not elicit enough information from the person taking the test. Too many unknowns can be only lightly touched upon or skipped completely.

(h) I believe in the C.L.E.P. program as I believe that it is a waste of time and energy to repeat courses of which the student already has the knowledge and skill taught in that course. I believe that the 50th percentile is too low, however.

Question 2

Comment on the use of individualized formats (study at your own rate, etc.) for classroom learning. What do you think of learning and behavioral objectives systems as an instructional format? What experience, if any, have you had with them?

Responses

Broward Community College (Central Campus)

(a) From a philosophical standpoint, individualized instruction seems ideal in areas of study where skills are involved. However, in disciplines that involve ideas and concepts the exchange of ideas among students and instructor is very important. A combination of both individualized and a more conventional approach might be good if it were not for the practical limitations of large class loads and "productivity" goals. From a practical standpoint this approach would work only if the instructor were willing to devote many hours to this method.

As for learning objectives, they probably are useful if they are set up in broad and flexible form. Rigid learning objectives in my opinion, are detrimental to the liberal arts (non-skill) type of course, and tend to fragment education into "pieces" of learning.

(b) Individualized forms of instruction tend to bore me--I prefer the interplay of ideas and personalities. However, I have had little experience in this area. As for learning objectives, I have mixed feelings. Detailed learning objectives can dehumanize education--make it mechanical. General and broad objectives could be useful since they would help to guarantee that the course is covering a representative sample of the material.

(c) All instructors should have definite learning objectives and some direction in behavioral objectives. Most students prefer a structured course. Individualized formats should be saved for exceptionally capable students and for individual study courses. Special classes for the underprepared might find this method useful. For regular classes I do not favor individualized instruction.

(d) I think learning and behavioral objectives are needed. I do not favor individualized instruction except for special classes. In foreign language teaching I prefer the "give-and-take" system where ideas and information can be exchanged.

(e) Individualized instruction is advisable only in honors courses or with superior students in regular classes. It is neither practical nor wise for the majority. The good student, however, has the personal discipline to make good use of the added responsibility such a format puts on him. All instructors should have specific objectives in their teaching. But I'm against what is sometimes classified as behavioral objectives--mechanized requirements which are not very different from the use of "workbooks" in the secondary or elementary school of a by-gone period. If the objectives are clear and comprehensive--fine; otherwise, learning becomes rolte memory and computerized--similar to old-fashioned workbooks, in some respects.

(f) No doubt individualized instruction is effective in many instances. However, I think the interaction in a class is essential to education. By this I mean the Socratic method of teaching with discussion and explanation of an issue. I think the setting of objectives is important, but often only academic objectives are set--with no room or concern for personal objectives in the course.

(g) Learning at one's own rate is fine. However, the business of educating the larger public is not the proper place to be using individualized instructional formats. If this must be done, auditing a course rather than taking it for credit is the proper way for those in need of individualized instruction to get their education. I do not approve of "learning objectives" as such as a useful teaching method, although, it is true, teaching should have objectives.

(h) I believe strongly in individualized instructional formats for classroom learning. I try to give every unusual or underprepared student such an opportunity. This is extremely difficult to do when one is teaching over 100 English composition students. Learning and behavioral objectives are important adjuncts to teaching, but they should not, in my opinion, be the only determinants of what goes on in the classroom.

Yes, I use behavioral objectives, especially in S.P.A.N.S. (special classes for the underprepared) and also in my other courses. With more advanced classes a teacher's objectives can be more general; with basic classes very specific objectives need to be met.

(i) Individualized instruction is practicable only for the more mature student--not generally indicated for 17-19 year olds. Too much temptation to "goof off." The instructor has important things to say and to discuss with the group.

Learning objectives are useful only if properly applied. They should be used as guidelines rather than as minute particles of information to be learned.

(j) I've had little if any experience with individualized instruction in the classroom. However, the present system of allowing students to work at their own rate both in and out of class is not satisfactory. The majority of students, if allowed to set their own pace, will make little progress in the classroom and probably even less outside the classroom.

(k) I have had no experience with the use of individualized instructional formats. However, I am inclined to think that in a class of students of various abilities the better students would tend to be neglected, as probably a disproportionate amount of the instructor's time would probably be spent on the poorer ones. However, if all students could receive equal instructional time, some courses might advantageously use individualized instructional formats for the benefit of students of various abilities. I am a bit hesitant about endorsing the academic concept of behavioral objectives. Teaching, as well as life, cannot constantly mark out with "feed back" what to learn or what to do. The student himself should make certain judgements about what should be learned in his reading. On the other hand, if learning objectives are reasonably broad, they may be a good teaching method.

(l) I do not have experience in individualized instructional formats. I have, among my students, young people who come from Nova /High School/ where this system is at work. Even the brightest claim that it is wonderful; I never heard one say that it is unsatisfactory.

(m) With unlimited resources I could philosophically agree with total individualization. Since we will always have limited resources, I have to take a practical viewpoint and compromise. Instead of spreading out the work for a course over a longer period of time for slow workers, I would like to see these people spend more time each day on a class, perhaps taking fewer classes. Logically, you cannot lecture etc. when each student is at a different place. The slow workers are exactly the students who also cannot work independently through self-help types of approaches.

(n) I do not believe that the individualized instructional formats are desirable for the average student. Only "honors" people are capable of using such teaching methodology. I have had some experience with this. Sometimes classes for the seriously underprepared find them useful. Behavioral objectives formats can be helpful if they are not too detailed.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)

(a) I have written behavioral objectives for three courses. I think they can help organize and structure a course when they are used as something to teach toward. Exclusively, they become dangerous to education. I am not a supporter of individualized instruction formats except in special classes.

(b) Individualized instructional formats can be valuable, particularly when so many wide differences exist in motivation and ability. Behavioral objectives made by the teacher for his own classes can be valuable, but those handed down from "above" can be destructive. I have been required to set them up in minute detail, but have no intention of utilizing them.

(c) I have had extensive experience writing and developing behavioral objectives, and I think such objectives are both valid, useful and even necessary in college teaching. As for individual instructional programs, some that I've seen are excellently developed and administered; others are an abomination, a parady of learning.

(d) I think any good teacher, without so structuring them, uses certain kinds of individualized formats in classroom learning. I think the formalized naming of learning objectives and behavioral objectives is a kind of game by which we are trying to find names to label those things which will take place anyhow. I think we need to stress content, and all these other things will come automatically. My experience with objectives has me think they are "gimmicky."

(e) I do not believe in behavioral objectives or in individualized instruction. MICKEY MOUSE!

(f) "Study at your own rate" is not conducive to discipline and academic excellence. At best it allows the "slow" or poor student an excuse for falling behind. This goes for most individualized instructional formats. Learning and behavioral objectives promote a lock-step methodology--but at least they prevent an instructor from teaching the same course for history and political science. I have written objectives and still am writing them. Unpleasant!

(g) Some courses, such as English Composition or Developmental Reading, are difficult to teach on an individualized basis--unless they are "programmed." The interaction of the class is important to the instructor in communication with the students. Stimulating ideas can be contagious.

(h) Individualized instructional formats have always seemed well based from a philosophical aspect. In reality, I have never used the format nor have I seen it in use. I would tend to be suspicious of the procedure until it was exhaustively tested.

(i) Time is a reality in the job world. Individualized instruction is what the instructor is for, but within limits. Behavioral Objectives are O.K.--but they should be used creatively and not in order to limit what is taught; they can be an excuse for simplistic teaching and evaluation. All my classes have them. I have written them for three courses! They are required!

(j) I think behavioral objectives are an excellent idea and I have approved of them since we have instituted them at Miami-Dade (South) in social science. Objectives make the course clearer for students and avoid excess garbage included at the arbitrary will of the instructor. Behavioral objectives are a bit more difficult to measure and to deal with, but again I believe they have a positive valie. "Study at one's own rate" presupposes a system that can allow for the time and measurable success for such a program without padding the results for the poorer and slower student. It has merit, but in a public institution, where time is of the essence, it is a bit hard to do.

(k) Individualized instructional formats work with well-motivated students and weekly supervision, and tutorial; individualized formats are the only solution I've seen for underprepared students. This counteracts the frustration of failing when success can be seen. The "study-at-your-own-rate" idea works over a time plan, not in instruction but in student product. Objectives have helped to clarify what is taught, but they often omit unmeasurables or long range effects on students. The behavioral objective format is awkward and the language is restructive, inflated and abstract. I have worked with them, written them, and worked around them.

(l) For an instructor with five or more sections, individual attention for students may be difficult. Students studying at their own rate is nothing new unless they individually ask to be tested whenever they feel ready for an exam. For obvious reasons, this would be difficult to comply with. Students who complete units before others might be encouraged to investigate other materials which could facilitate broader comprehension of subject matter. Slower students--in fact all students experiencing confusion or difficulties--are usually encouraged to seek help from the instructor. We have employed both cognitive and affective objectives in the educational program. They have been helpful insofar as clarifying what students are expected to know in fulfilling course requirements. Such objectives also help in structuring courses for the instructor.

(m) A certain amount (as much as the instructor can manage) of individualized instruction is necessary to the teaching of composition. Most behavioral objectives I have seen are so clumsily worded or incapable of objective measurement that I find them worthless.

(n) When feasible, the student should be allowed to learn at his own rate. Behavioral objectives as a format for classroom instruction stink! They have recently been introduced into the courses I teach. They do not allow enough freedom of instruction for the professor or enough freedom in learning for the student.

(o) I don't see how anyone can accomplish anything without a firm set of objectives. I have taught four courses for which there are departmental cognitive and affective objectives. These are not necessarily my objectives, and in most cases were written to coordinate with a particular textbook. As such, they are make-work. I believe that any college-instructor should be able to present his objectives for his courses and support them with evaluative instruments and data. However, I do not believe that the objectives need to be the same for each person, if several instructors of one course are in basic agreement on its content. Nor do I believe that a prescribed form for objectives is necessary as long as they are clearly stated.

At the college level, schedules and the number of students make it difficult to individualize instruction under normal circumstances. It is possible to use programmed texts for some courses, permitting the student to work at his own speed. These are most useful for courses such as math, where cognitive objectives predominate and skill is the desired goal. I have found that offering options, such as variable work for A, B, and C grades is not desirable for the students. The poor student, or the disinterested one, may be relieved to have only a minimum amount of work to pass the course. The better students say that they do not feel challenged to work up to maximum capability under variable plans, such as having to do a term paper in order to get an A, even if they have A grades on all other work. I think individualized instruction is essential for remedial work, and this is best handled at the college level by special divisions. An individualized program for a few especially capable students might be designed by an instructor with a normal load. Otherwise, unless the institution is willing to establish honors programs with independent study credit, with sufficient instructor time permitted, such ideas simply are not feasible.

(p) Individualized formats might have a purpose in some courses, but I feel they would be less than useful in my classroom. Objective systems can be helpful to instructor and student alike, but only if used with a certain amount of flexibility.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)

(a) I am presently in my second year of experimentation with the use of individualized instructional formats for English composition (a skill). The learning objectives and behavioral objectives are part of this format as I use it, and understand that it is being used around the country. Since I have begun to use these methods, I have found that there seems to be less confusion in the minds of my students as to what I expect of them. Perhaps my enthusiasm is distorting my perception. I hope not.

(b) I have had no experience in writing behavioral objectives. But I do not think behavioral objectives and goals make much practical sense as an instructional format.

(c) I have used behavioral objectives extensively in composition. I consider the format quite successful, and for my own teaching style prefer it to the lecture system. The student needs to know what is expected of him. Behavioral objectives, when criterion referenced, prevent teachers from being capricious (such as the English teacher who flunks the paper because of spelling errors). I have taught at least 10 sections of composition using behavioral objectives. However, I am not suggesting that they are the only way to go. Alternate modes are also needed to fit the learning style of the teacher.

(d) Given "open-ended" semester, O.K. Learning Objectives/ Behavioral Objectives--such systems force "content orientation" at the expense of other meaningful, truly educating experiences. I have had experience writing them and have witnessed them in action. I believe that the "necessity" of writing them is often used as a means of "putting down" teachers, and that in some systems, especially in secondary schools, the evaluation of one's "behavioral objectives" is used more as a means of intimidation and "punishment" than as a potential means of improving education.

(e) Individual instructional formats are needed in order to help some students learn, especially since we now have such a wide variance of abilities in the classroom. Setting up learning objectives is an ideal way to approach individualized instruction. However, it requires a great deal of preparation time for the teacher to set up, a good deal of expense to get the suitable "hard" and "soft" ware, and continuous monitoring and revision to make it work. I have studied under Dr. John Roueche and worked out a unit of study for a three week period. Other teachers who have (perhaps half-heartedly) tried it complained that there was not enough time to go into the subject on such a detailed, step-by-step basis. I am going to try it again with two groups (one deaf and the other normal) to see how it works out.

(f) I am strongly in favor of individualized instructional formats. I prefer to interpret "individualized" as meaning more than just adjusting time. I think of behavioral objectives systems as a great aid in learning and hence a desirable instructional format. I am currently teaching four sections of individualized composition.

(g) I believe every course should be developed on an individualized study, system's approach. Learning objectives, behavioral objectives or performance objectives are extremely important to the process, but stating or writing them under rigid standards does as much harm as good. I favor "goals" as Mager describes them. I have had nine years experience teaching, writing and developing visuals for a system's approach.

(h) Self-paced instruction is very effective with respect to poorly prepared students and for high achieving students. It has saved many students from failure. My experience has shown that more topics can be learned than with lecture presentations.

(i) The use of individualized instruction is becoming more widespread and has been used in our department in many and varied courses. It has met with a variety of responses from students and teachers alike. The biggest problem seems to be that students procrastinate and really feel the need for some deadlines, or else they never complete the course. Also, some prefer the lecture method. Ideally, both methods should be available so the student could have a choice--to choose the one that would benefit him the most.

(j) Theoretically, individualized instructional formats are great; but at our college they don't seem to have worked, according to the feedback I have received from students and some faculty members who have tried it.

I have found learning objectives and behavioral objectives very helpful as an instructional format. I use them for every unit I teach (Psychology and Anthropology). The students universally endorse them and they (study guides) allow me to give more stimulating lectures or lead fruitful discussions rather than being chained to the textbook or to handouts. The students have the security of knowing what material they will be tested on, and so can enjoy the illustrative and extra material presented in class. There is more time for discussions.

Manatee Community College

(a) Individualized instructional units are a means to an end. They should not be used to exclude the teacher contact completely. Instructor approval can be a motivating factor even at the college level. Behavioral objectives are good. They are goals or aims that have always been a part of planning but are now more visible or descriptive of what the teacher actually expects to achieve with instruction.

(b) I firmly believe that each person should be able to learn at his own rate. In the absence of this ideal, the minimum requirement for a learning situation would be a set of behavioral objectives. I have developed these objectives for each module of each course I teach and find that, as expected, students perform better when they are appraised of what one expects them to have accomplished.

(c) This (behavioral objectives format) is fine for the right teacher or team of teachers. For the traditional teacher this "bugs the hell" out of him. The learning and behavioral objective format may be another educational "gimmick," not needed if the instructor is doing a good job of teaching. I've had no experience in it, but all our course syllabi now must be so written.

(d) The theory of individualized instructional formats is an ideal one. Learning or behavioral objectives are essential to the success of the individualized format. It has been my experience that in practice individualized instruction requires assistants in the classroom, smaller classes, or both, in order to be successful.

(e) I think that well-constructed, individualized instructional formats are valuable for classroom learning. I use the term "individualized" to mean offering a choice of learning activities and "rate" to the learner--not as synonymous with "independent" study. In some subject areas, such as writing, small group work is essential. Large group instruction is useful for selected situations in almost any subject area.

(f) Individualized instruction is desirable if class numbers are low. With the current economic trend toward larger classes, the mechanics of individualized instruction become overwhelming.

(g) I think that learning objectives are crucial in areas where behavioral and performance skills can be measured. They are also important in the inexact disciplines, but are more subject to interpretation and seat-of-the-pants judgement (usually very non-uniform). I think that well thought through progressions of objectives makes for a good learning format. I have had considerable experience with them in two courses.

(h) "Different strokes for different folks." The way I learn something probably is not the most effective way the next person will learn. I'm in favor of different formats for the same course--concerning individualized instruction. Behavioral objectives are a tool and should be used as such. They do allow for a solid base from which to build individual instructional formats in that they put learning on a competency basis. I have developed behavioral objectives for the courses I teach.

(i) If individualized instruction means establishing an individual learning program that corresponds to a student's learning style, I am all for it. However, many institutions and administrations interpret it to mean independent study. This I am against. The statement of performance objectives promotes better learning. I use this format in all of my courses.

Edison Community College

(a) Some courses may lend themselves to an individualized instructional format. However, as a social science teacher, I believe that much would be lost in classroom teaching if class discussions were eliminated. It is my belief that all students can learn a great deal about their fellow man by sharing their ideas and beliefs. The comments made by a slow learner may be as valid as or even superior to those made by higher achievers.

Good teachers have always established goals for themselves and their students. Teachers and students should account for their actions. Behavioral objectives have for a long time been a part of a good lesson plan. However, it is my belief that educators have gone overboard on the behavioral objective syndrone. The day-to-day management of the classroom needs to remain flexible to allow for differences in needs and experiences of the students. The students can be the best judge of what adjustments need to be made, and the teacher should not be restricted by too detailed behavioral objectives, which were planned long before the first class meeting.

(b) For some courses individualized instruction is ideal, in theory at least. For such skills as typing, foreign languages, and reading it may even be practical. In courses that deal with controversial issues, where discussion, debate, etc. are essential it is almost impossible to use profitably. There are any number of bright, well-motivated students who have the self discipline that is necessary to profit from individualized instruction. On the other hand, there are far more who don't and can't. The real problem, however, lies in the extra burden that falls on the institution. An instructor at a community college, who carries a 15-15 hour load with classes composed of 35+ students simply does not have the time to provide quality individualized instruction. I find the use of behavioral objectives to be a helpful tool--but I do object, strongly, to the coercion, the mandatory requirement that they must be used and must be approved by every level of administration. I take particular exception to this as an obligation to the state. I feel that this should be a matter of policy at the individual institution, and that exceptions should be granted when appropriate. When policies of this nature are dictatorial, abuses result. I have been told that in some classes course outlines are distributed on the first day, and students are invited to drop the outlines into the wastebasket as they leave the room!

I've had the dismal experience of discovering that one of my previous Division Chairmen has presented part-time instructors with copies of my course outline!

(c) I think that perhaps in some disciplines and with some students that individualized formats can be used successfully. But I must temper this statement by stingent limitations on both disciplines and students to the few and the gifted. Generally, I do not agree with the philosophy of individualized instructional formats. If human behavior could be so easily channeled, then correspondence schools could just as easily replace conventional colleges and universities. I believe, instead, in the carrot and the stick philosophy--that is, learning motivated by a combination of reward and punishment.

In recent years I have changed my attitudes toward both learning and behavioral objectives; I now believe that they have a valid place in the learning process. But I must say that the rigid taboos imposed on such words as "appreciation" and "judgement" have hindered rather than aided the transition from the old to the new methods of teaching. I accept it but do not wholly approve the strictly behavioral method.

(d) We use behavioral objectives at our college and have for almost five years. I find them helpful to some degree, but what good are they if the students ignore them? Further, if they are too detailed, each instructor might as well write a complete text for his courses. In the case of individualized instruction, such a format bases a tendency to fragment the instructors, teaching, even when, as in my case, laboratory (language) or tutorial services are available.

(e) Individualized instructional formats, from the students' point of view, are invaluable for skill courses such as reading, math, etc. It is difficult to use them for conceptual courses, since it seems that the best method for them should include class discussion. I have had much experience with the system of behavioral objectives, and feel that they are valid only to a degree. Certainly there are some facts which a student ought to retain, and these can be included in the objectives. There are tasks (papers, etc.) which can be learned in this manner. The tendency, though, has been to omit the idea of quality of a student's work and to consider only quantity. This is highly dangerous, not only from an academic point of view but also from the student's. This is especially true when he is later expected to perform quality work on the job or in graduate study. The greatest mistake being made in the behavioral sciences is when administrators require instructors to use this method of instruction for all courses. While some courses may work all right this way, others do not. I really believe that the motivation behind this idea is to prevent instructors from making value judgements about ideas and to water down higher education into a quantitative kind of occupational training, not dealing with "dangerous" ideas or values.

I have taught courses in humanities and art history using behavioral objectives and this experience has born out my feelings. Students become more concerned with grades than with learning, and many students, particularly those with maturity and insight, object strongly to them /behavioral objectives/.

(f) I think we've gone overboard in this area--a fad which has become an administrative bible in some areas for certain books, words etc. It has become an intrusion in some areas to academic freedom in the use of methods. It is a complete denial of using the intuitive method for learning, and, therefore, a dogmatic approach to learning. It is a demand that everyone use the scientific, empirical, pragmatic approach to learning. Is learning always supposed to be simple and all spelled out? Is life this way? This is not a rejection of objectives, but a concern for other types of objectives. It is a type of state and institutionally formed objectives demanded in a dogmatic way. No discussion!

(g) Learning and behavioral objectives do not work in certain courses due to the nature of the course which requires extensive work in the classroom.

(h) Individualized instructional formats are suitable for some students in certain courses. The option should be available. An across-the-board policy, however, is unsound. In some fields of study--especially in the social sciences--the learning situation should be a social situation; otherwise, the learning has little validity or justification on any grounds for support by the society.

The emphasis on learning objectives is appropriate. A certain degree of extremism is to be expected, but it should be resisted. Behavioral objectives are a step in the right direction if not pushed to silly extremes more suited to courses in learning how to operate machines. In several years experience with this approach, I am still discovering new, more suitable behavioral objectives. However, the demands on one's time tend to lead to overemphasis on the text as a source of authoritative data.

Question 3

Comment on the use of the lecture and class discussions in the community college classroom. To what extent do you use each and why?

Responses

Broward Community College (Central Campus)

(a) I believe in class discussion only if it is structured and prepared for by students. "Pooled ignorance" is useless. I think much can be learned from a good lecture, and feel it's a shame that "lecture" has come to be a dirty word.

(b) I use the lecture extensively, and discussion to the extent that it proves profitable--this varies from one class to the next. I lecture to supplement assigned reading and to produce questions and discussion. I try to challenge the student to think and to check on how well he is grasping the assigned reading.

(c) Lecture, 3/4--discussion, 1/4--very little else except on occasion.

(d) In foreign languages the instructional process is both a give and repeat process, especially on lower levels. On higher levels, perhaps, as related to the junior college, the effort is to apply structural patterns. Lecture and discussion are quite helpful when treating literature, history and cultural aspects.

(e) Most of my courses are lecture-discussion. I explain new materials first and then have discussion to get various viewpoints and points of interest. Occasionally I might show a film concerning the topic at hand.

(f) In the community college "parallel" program and lecture method is in most cases the preferable one. Freshmen and sophomores are still only acquiring basic knowledge to be applied in the upper divisions. A small amount of discussion may fit into the course, but there can be a great waste of time with students talking on subjects about which they have not yet acquired sufficient background knowledge.

(g) Both lecture and discussion should be used during the hour. I find that a fifty minute lecture (on some point of grammar or literary work) bores the student. They really prefer discussion (in foreign language) of a question and answer format. But there is sometimes an impatience to sit back, listen, and take notes. These two formats are the main bases for my courses. However, I show four films per term in each class; and, of course, students must also attend the language lab.

(h) Lecturing is necessary in a classroom. Students listen and are relaxed and resting. This, I believe, is what they like and want. Discussion may be interesting for some but not for all, i.e.--in an English class. In a foreign language class it is difficult to have students talk unless they know the language fairly well. I do not approve of "learning instruction packages."

(i) Lectures, unless you are emulating Winston Churchill, are a bore. I do very little lecturing. I try to have class discussion that is kept orderly and intelligent. "Rap" sessions are a waste of valuable time, teach very little, and are a "cop out" for the poorly prepared instructor.

(j) I use lecture and discussion. Both work well, but I never lecture for more than 15 minutes at any time--I teach French.

(k) I teach history and use lecture/discussion almost exclusively. If a community college is to prepare students for higher education, this is the only meaningful way, probably, to present a course. "AV" aids can be used, but overuse of them is a step towards regression into the past, when many secondary school "history-government" teachers were coaches first and teachers third (receivers of pay checks being second).

(l) In my French classes I lecture not over one third of any normal class period. Rarely will a community college student profit from a class devoid of participation. On a rare occasion I may use a film.

(m) Lecture and class discussion should both be utilized and both are the basis for my classes. If the class is an introductory one, probably more lecture is necessary (75%). If it is a second or third sequence course, possibly 60% lecture.

(n) Lecture and discussion are the best methods for academic instruction in the community college. By the time the student has reached college age, he should be self disciplined enough not to become too bored. On occasion I use "AV" just enough for change of pace.

(o) Each instructor should use the method which achieves his or her objectives. My classes are about 50/50, depending on the subject, the particular group composing each class, and how I happen to feel. Some background is necessary before meaningful discussion can take place; some discussion is needed to make a lecture clear and, therefore, meaningful.

(p) I prefer lecture in basic courses and use discussion in the more advanced. I feel instructors at all levels spend too much time "discussing" and never care enough to give students the "basics." Discussion is very nice for the coffee shop.

(q) In one of my classes (the use of film in literature) I do not lecture at all. I believe constant dialogue is preferable, although a certain amount of lecturing is necessary in literature courses. I use films a great deal for my classes in "The Film as Literature."

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)

(a) If the instructor has a body of material that the student must get, lecture is quite necessary. In a course in world literature I use lecture almost exclusively. Discussion has its place; it is relaxing and frequently entertaining. If it helps learning, it is useful. I have not been very successful with discussion, although I would like to be. However, I do not think it should be a substitute for solid preparation by the teacher.

(b) Lecture and class discussion are most important. I use both extensively. It is important in a college as diverse as ours to have students of different races, colors, creeds and countries to hear other than standard views.

(c) There is an even division between lecture, discussion and audio-visual aids in some classes, including my own.

(d) In most courses the student wants to feel he is growing in knowledge. Lecture and discussion should be balanced to this end. Occasionally I include a film.

(e) Unless the instructor is a brilliant lecturer, and most are not, formal lectures accomplish little. Open discussion in a class of fewer than thirty students, on the other hand, seems to be very profitable for everyone in the class. Outside of a bit of audio-visual materials, other "newer" approaches have been pretty useless for me.

(f) In general level survey or basic studies courses the lecture is always (partly) essential. I have always relied on this approach in order to transmit basic core concepts in the course and to facilitate course behavioral objectives. Class discussion is also most essential, and I have always encouraged such among my students. Discussion not only reveals how effectively learning is or is not facilitated (though not the only way, of course); it also gives students the opportunity to reveal some of their human-ness. Other teaching approaches (Audio-Visual, etc.) are of only minor importance.

(g) In most of my classes I use a combination of formal lectures, for presenting major topics not satisfactorily covered in the text, and informal lecture-discussion (or lecture-participation) modes. These are by far the major formats of my courses. In a few courses I use few formal lectures and a good deal of participatory activity of an affective nature. This is particularly satisfactory in Dynamics of Behavior and Introduction to Education.

(h) Lecture and discussion are the most effective forms of classroom instruction. I rely on them about 80% of the time. Occasionally I use a bit of audio-visual material.

(i) Both lecture and discussion are solid teaching techniques--the ideal is a skillful blending of the two, with most weight on lecture.

(j) My academic classes are largely lecture and discussion.

(k) "Pavem nostrum quotidianum"--our generation has not been able to improve on the techniques of the masters. Did Socrates ever give a multiple-choice exam?

(l) I use lecture-discussion as the basis for my courses on a 50-50 ratio. I need student response and discussion to be certain the materials are understood. Lectures are explanatory.

(m) I use lecture most but have considerable success with both. I am more adept at lecture and my students prefer my lecture method. But I try to use discussion and participation on a planned basis. Gathering chairs in a circle and pooling ignorance is not my bag, and I usually fail at that method. Both lecture and discussion have a place, but both should be planned and interwoven for effective results.

(n) I always use a combination of lecture-class discussion--active exercise participation, with an emphasis on the latter. Both lecture and class discussion are kept to a minimum except when ideas are to be generated. The ratio becomes more equal when I teach sophomore-level literature classes.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)

(a) I do not use the lecture method to any extent, although some kinds of information for my classes will be available on video-tape in the AV section of the library. Class discussions are valuable for most students and I do incorporate some into my individualized sections also. In my Creative Writing courses class discussion and peer critiques are essential. I have always found that students need to relate to each other if the educational process is going to mean anything to them. I would not wish to abandon personal interaction in the classroom. One of the saddest comments that I often hear from students who have transferred to the universities where "standards are so high" is that the experience has seemed so impersonal to them. How can that sort of education be said to be a humanizing one?

(b) I use lecture almost exclusively in humanities and lecture and discussion (or student work) equally in drama; predominantly discussion (student work) in speech or acting.

(c) Lecture should be used rarely--it's a medieval custom started because books were rarely and expensive (and other media non-existent. If one must lecture, he ought to be a great speaker in the rhetoric of his delivery and in his use of principles of learning, such as concept teaching. I rarely lecture, even though I think I am good at it.

(d) The "lecture" as I know it to exist in junior college classrooms is not the "beast" I experienced in the classrooms of the university I attended, and certainly it is not the "blind monster" of its auditorium sessions. Rather, it has evolved to be largely "verbal paraphrasing of textbook content"--plus "illustratives" understandable by the poorest students in the class. This is because so many junior college students are unable to read college level (or even 12th grade) material intelligently. Add to this inability their weakness in "writing skills"--the subsequent demise of written examinations!--and the proper designation for many of them is "functionally illiterate at the college level." Thus the lecture as I know it at junior colleges is a necessity--an arm outstretched to the student.

(e) Academic students of high intelligence are generally so used to the procedure using lecture and class discussion that they either do not need any other methods in order to learn or dislike the disruption that may result from changing their work-study habits. Supplementing (and in some cases substituting for) with individualized (audio-tutorial or other) methods is needed for underprepared, slower-thinking or lower ability students who need prodding, repetition, graphic explanation, or their own time in which to do their work. When subject matter rather than skills are taught, the lecture should predominate.

(f) I feel the lecture and class discussion, the way I use them in my courses, are very valuable. I get very favorable student response on the evaluations (of the instructor) conducted by students at the end of each semester. Many students comment that their class notes were most useful to them in learning the material. They are free to comment and are encouraged to do so. I tried an individualized, program-learning package once on a particular unit and the class did significantly worse than those in the other class who had the lecture. The students commented that they missed the interaction with the teacher and with other students that the other situation provided.

(g) I believe strongly that both the lecture and class discussion have a place in the community college classroom. It depends on the expertise of the instructor as to which is more effective, and partially on the type of course. One thing I do not find useful--the so-called learning package. I tried it with disappointing results.

An introductory content course in a field completely new to the student almost has to be largely lecture--with leeway, of course, for questions and some discussion. In second level courses in Psychology it would appear that more discussion would be appropriate. So many variables are involved, it is impossible to give a clear cut answer. I use lecture mostly in my Anthropology courses, but discussion mostly in my Adolescent Psychology. It depends on how verbal people are in certain classes.

(h) Lecture and discussion generally are the poorest choice of instruction. I never use either in my classes.

(i) I believe (from what my students tell me) that lecturing is widely practiced, narrowly defended, and substantially over-rated. Class discussion is better than no discussion, but in my experience it is seldom vital unless it has been preceded by group work and enough time to establish a large group sense. A class discussion with no circularity of response, and no more than dutiful involvement, is a dreary business. I teach English composition.

Manatee Community College

(a) The lecture and class discussion format of instruction is better suited to some curricula than to others. I employ lecture-discussion for the presentation of principles. Much of my instruction in English-Communications is presented through a laboratory format.

(b) I believe that there is a place for both lecture and class discussion in the college classroom, and that the choice should depend on the learning objectives to be accomplished. I use both methods (about 40% lecture--60% discussion). I use lecture for presentation of large amounts of information (which the teacher can synthesize from various sources) or information which requires explanation over and above that given in other resources available to the students. Discussion is used for higher level, cognitive objectives as "group problem solving situations," affective objectives--such as discussion of feelings and attitudes, as well as for the opportunity for people to ask questions to clarify their own individual understanding.

Since most of my classes are fairly large, the lecture and discussion method of teaching is the most practical. It is a method that I use a majority of the time in my classes.

(c) This is one alternative delivery system. I think it should be possible to have a large lecture section, a small discussion section and an auto-tutorial section for the same course. I use the lecture and discussion format a great deal. One of my classes is large, which makes it difficult to use formats other than the lecture. In my other courses, class discussion and involvement by the student is a prime factor.

(d) The lecture method is quite effective with mature college students. It isn't the method itself but rather the skill in which it is used that makes the difference. I use the lecture method with periodic demonstrations and films on occasion. I encourage questions so that my presentation is not the formal, traditional lecture.

(e) There is a place for both! Class size, amount of facts, and degree of behavioral change all bear on this. Students prefer participative activities. I use lecture more heavily in teaching principles and facts, and participative techniques to explore feelings, broaden scope of understanding and improve motivation.

(f) The use of lecture and class discussion depends upon the size of the class. Whenever possible I try to combine lecture and discussion about half and half. I have little faith in "learning packages" and other such "devices." Sometimes I vary the pace with AV material.

(g) This method (lecture-discussion), sorry to say, is still used by over 50% of our teachers. It is a comfortable and easy way to teach. In my courses in education and psychology I try to vary this by Audio Visual materials and auto-tutorial at times.

Edison Community College

(a) Lectures and class discussion still have a place in the community college classroom. I use this method of instruction a great deal. I stress class discussion more than lectures. Of course, students need to be prepared when they come to class.

(b) Lecture and class discussion are the backbone of all my classes. Lecture tends to predominate in introductory classes and discussion-debate in advanced ones. I utilize both because I have never found any other technique that is more effective (including so-called learning in structional packages). I make every effort to create a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom. I find so many students who have been stiffled and discouraged from asking questions or contributing to discussion in early childhood elementary school experiences that I make a big point of "there is no such thing as a dumb question" and "If you do not understand a concept, please let me know" so that I can re-word, use additional examples or whatever else to clarify the point. This is obviously effective since I consistently receive high ratings on student evaluations in this area.

I use both the lecture and the class discussion. There are certain aspects of my discipline of speech instruction--theory, philosophy and concepts--that are best covered in the classroom through lecture presentation and others that lend themselves to natural and worthwhile discussion. So I use both, primarily being convenience and circumstance govern.

(c) I use both lecture and discussion because the nature of the subject requires a great deal of discussion. I see little value in the use of gimmicks such as learning packages, etc.

(d) Lecture deserves a place in the community college classroom as one of a variety of instructional methods. Too much emphasis on downgrading or eliminating lecture probably constitutes to poor quality rather than improved technique when it is used. New emphasis on TV may correct this.

Class discussions--especially a mixture of small group discussions--articulated with lecture and/or AV presentations are deemed valuable learning experiences and are frequently used.

(e) My approach is to limit the traditional lecture session to introductory materials only. Then class discussion, including individual and/or panel groups, takes over. I limit "lecture remarks" only to clarify misunderstood principles, to act as a devil's advocate in some situations, or to offer alternative solutions.

(f) The lecture and discussion method is still the best technique for the teaching of the courses I teach. I use them, I believe, to good advantage, and supplement with audio-visual materials such as films, slides, music, etc. In humanities, particularly, the student cannot be told just to go and read and then take a test. He needs help and guidance, since much of the reading is difficult.

Also, I deal with values and concepts which are not absolute and, therefore, must be discussed.

(g) I am in humanities--philosophy--heavy on classroom participation, although I do lecture some.

(h) I use both lecture and discussion because the nature of the subject requires a great deal of discussion. I don't go in for fads such as learning packets, etc. although occasionally I use audio-visual materials.

Question 4

Do you believe that there has been an overuse of the all-objective test format in classroom tests? Should students be required to take more subjective or combination-type tests (objective-subjective) in order to gain some experience in writing and organizing skills under test conditions?

Responses

Broward Community College (Central Campus)

(a) More writing is needed; one begets the other: students cannot write because they are not required to do so; because students are not required to write, they never learn this skill.

Before my days they used to say: "high school gives you a decent education." In my days they said: "High school no longer gives you a decent education; all it does is make you literate, and little more." Now all we can say is: "high school does not even give one literacy, much less a decent education."

(b) I almost never give an "objective" test. English courses do not lend themselves to such testing. Writing is demonstrated by writing. A written test can be objective. I feel that most English teachers still prefer the "essay exam."

(c) No, I do not believe objective exams are overused except when they are mostly matching. Have a strong belief in good multiple choice questions. My experience with subjective questions is that given the average B.C.C. student, if the teacher is well-organized and prepared in lecture, the responses are good. If the teacher just "shoots the breeze" responses will be medium to poor. If a teacher can teach and a student can write, fine. If the teacher just talks, it doesn't matter either way.

(d) Yes, indeed. There has been so much overuse of the all-objective test in high school that the students, in most cases, don't know what to do if they are presented with different exams.

(e) The objective test is the result of high enrollments. Reading 150 essays is no fun. However, I myself think a combination of subjective and objective is the best route.

(f) In the English area there is not an overuse of objective tests since they are rarely used. I don't know about other areas. I do know my students report they have little writing to do now and the same is true of their high school.

(g) The objective type of test is not a true measure of knowledge. I believe some written work should be required. This is particularly true if the student has not passed the level where he can read and write the language with some facility. Here again we have become slaves to numbers and the easiest way out.

(h) I believe in the combination objective-subjective approach. However, if incorporated into today's college scene the maximum teaching load would have to be reduced to nine hours.

(i) Yes. More writing and substantial evaluation of the ability to express oneself. Small sections make this feasible.

(j) Yes! Yes! All-objective tests show laziness and uselessness on the part of the teacher. If an instructor cannot take time to formulate a good essay and grade it according to clarity and content, he obviously does not have the time to prepare his classes correctly or to evaluate his own teaching methods effectively.

(k) Yes. Much more writing should be done in most classes.

(l) Yes, let them write. We are not robots or push-button machines. The human brain needs special nourishment that only much good reading and serious writing can healthfully do.

(m) Yes, I agree entirely. Writing should be emphasized in college; if an individual does not learn and know how to write at that level, he never will.

(n) More original thinking, organizing and writing should be required on tests throughout the college.

(o) Yes indeed. How are English teachers supposed to convince their students of the need to develop proper writing skills when no other instructors require a demonstration of these skills? I observe that far too many students cannot spell, refuse to use the dictionary, have only a vague notion about proper punctuation and even capitalization. They do not move logically from one thought to another. It takes a great deal of practice to overcome this disconnected, unrelated kind of thinking and writing.

(p) There is no doubt but that students need to practice and learn how to express themselves through writing responses under pressure. The objective test gives no indication of a student's ability in this direction, nor does it give him any practical experience. A big weakness in our educational system today is the lack of preparedness in these fundamentals in the student's pre-college years.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)

(a) Yes. The only kind of test which measures the student's knowledge of writing skills and literature are tests on the synthesis level. One of my units in English 120 is on taking essay exams and taking lecture notes.

(b) I do not know to what extent other departments use all-objective tests. I believe students should be required to write in every course as a way of gaining experience and organizing skill.

(c) I believe objective tests are very much overused. There should be more subjective (well thought out on specific objectives) and a combination of both types.

(d) Yes--I certainly agree there is not enough emphasis on subjective or written types of tests in the community college.

(e) There is a possible overuse of such tests. However, with class size and semester load as it is, it almost becomes a necessary tool (objective test) of the teacher. The ideal would include subjective testing--as it does develop skills untouched and untefhed by objective exams.

(f) Yes, I do believe there is an overuse of all-objective tests. An important part of learning is the ability to formulate responses and to organize material. I think the ideal test is one which includes one major essay question in which the student must synthesize the major idea(s) in the unit being tested, one or two short essays on subsidiary ideas, and a few short answer "identify and give the significance of" key terms, dates, persons or whatever.

(g) Subjective tests are generally more effective teaching-learning devices than objective tests. Increased use of objective tests represents an unfortunate compromise with the need for greater productivity in community college instructional programs.

(h) I personally prefer the essay type as a means of testing comprehension, but usually employ the objective test because of the large numbers of students I teach each term. It is not the function of most courses to teach proper grammatical expression. English and essay courses through grammar school should have prepared the would-be college student in this regard.

(i) I think there has been an outrageous overuse of objective testing in the classroom. Rarely do such tests demonstrate anything other than a student's ability to retain data. Teaching students to write will be so much easier and certainly more profitable when most courses demand written essays from students.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)

(a) There has been an overuse of the all-objective test format, but when one has 200 students, some of whom cannot write, and at least five quizzes are given in each of six classes, there really is no alternative, I believe. If classes were smaller and student load less, I would prefer at least some essay questions.

(b) I don't think it is necessary to give subjective tests.

(c) Yes, I certainly believe subjective testing should be used, at least to some extent at the community college.

(d) Yes, definitely. I strongly believe a test containing a variety of types of questions are best, although they are very time consuming to grade which is why many teachers don't use them.

(e) I would say that there has been a tendency in recent years to overemphasize the all-objective test (mainly to make grading easier). There should be some subjective or combination-type tests as well as for the purposes stated, and to get a better idea of the student's performance.

(f) Definitely. Absolutely.

(g) Yes, all-objective tests have been greatly overused. Usually it is confined to cognitive learning, as if nothing else existed. I see no value to forcing students to take combination tests to prepare them for taking more tests. However, if a test of any kind can be developed whereby a student understands more and sees more after taking the test than before, the test can be a good learning device. But the emphasis must be on the content, not the format.

(h) Yes, Yes. Unquestionably.

(i) Indeed I do believe that there has been an overuse of the all-objective test format in classroom tests. It seems also that the tests of this kind often reflect the mindlessness of the course content, and its relevance to the student and his goals and needs. I would like to see more instructors ask students to write essay type answers. This helps them organize material systematically and logically. Yet when they get to the universities, how often do they need to use this skill of on the spot writing? I wonder.

(j) The question is academic. Any instructors who feel it necessary can give essay tests. But to urge it in general is to argue! No one gives essay exams. Therefore, we must give essay exams to give students practice in essay exams which no one gives.

Manatee Community College

(a) Yes; certainly students should think and write more examinations. One thing debilitating against this has been larger and larger classes assigned each teacher. Too, going to IBM and computer scored tests have let out the subjective.

(b) I do think students should be forced to think rather than parrot--I am very much in favor of subjective evaluation. My students can elect a module, which results in a research paper, graded for both content and presentation.

(c) I lean toward the combination (objective-subjective) test. But large numbers of students may force the all-objective type test upon me if for no other reason than ease of scoring.

(d) Yes, I think in some types of classes we beat it (objective testing) to death. I prefer to "stretch" students by making them organize facts and communicate them as well as use them. Time and limited "standards" are the major drawbacks.

(e) Yes, I believe the entire test syndrome is out of hand. We have made so much of tests results that we now teach with that awareness and we put more emphasis on reading ability as it applies to answering objective test questions. Writing would allow the student to express himself more and let you find out what he knows rather than what he does not know.

(f) Yes, but with large classes one is forced to use objective tests mostly. Yes, I am for objective-subjective combination type tests.

(g) It is my opinion that the essay test is the most accurate measurement of student achievement. However, in many cases the class size precludes the use of this type of test.

(h) Yes, I believe that there has been an overuse of poorly constructed objective tests. Most test for the level of recall and some understanding and this is not sufficient. In the absence of objective test items which measure higher level cognitive skills such as understanding, analysis synthesis and evaluation, subjective items should be included.

(i) I feel very strongly that the objective format has been overused. Students need more essay tests to gain experience in organizing and expressing thoughts.

Edison Community College

(a) It is difficult in some courses to make a proper evaluation of the knowledge and skills of the student with objective tests only. The students should be given opportunities to express themselves in varied ways. My tests are usually a combination type (objective and subjective).

(b) Yes, I do believe there has been an overuse of the all-objective format in classroom tests. These tests, at least for me, are cop-outs. But I have been forced to take this easy way out because of the increased student load. As a result, I rely much more on the more easily graded objective test, generally the simple true-false test or the short completion test (one or two words only). I earnestly believe that my students should be required to take more subjective or combination-type tests; but I will not do so because of the greatly increased time required for conscientiously grading them. After all, there is a limit to my own time and energy.

(c) The all-objective test format has, in my opinion, been greatly overemphasized by many, myself included. In recent years, I have swung away and allocated a weight of thirty to forty percent to essay questions requiring analysis and synthesis of data. Subjective portions of these tests have been "take-home."

(d) I feel, and our students' initial writing samples tend to hear me out, that an all-objective test format is poor for any student. Many students have no concept of writing or skills of logic. Therefore, I feel that combination-type tests should be used. Otherwise, any skills learned in composition will atrophy.

(e) As long as the teacher loads of community college instructors is so high, it will be necessary to mostly use objective tests in order to deal with the number of students we carry. This is unfortunate, since only certain kinds of knowledge can be tested this way. The student also needs to have experience in writing and expression of ideas. He does not get enough of this kind of experience in the community college today.

(f) Yes to all questions but due to increasing class loads this goal has become less attainable.

(g) Yes. I believe there should be more objective-subjective tests to permit the student to gain greater writing skills.

(h) Yes, Yes, Yes. All objective, multiple-guess, true-false, matching or whatever--provided by the instruction manual that accompanies the textbook and acquires no effort on the part of the instructor to grade is truly repugnant to me.

Question 5

Comment on the practice of academic grade inflation (instructors grading students higher than their work warrants), which is reported to have occurred in recent years. If so, what are some of the reasons why? Has the practice of using student evaluations of their instructors been a factor?

Responses

Broward Community College (Central Campus)

(a) One reason for academic grade inflation is pressure from the administration. Another is pressure from students through "Teacher Evaluations."

(b) Grade inflation has occurred because: (1) instructors want bodies in their classes to warrant their own existence on the job; (2) some of the instructors are underprepared; (3) fear of dropping enrollments in some areas and the pressures applied by "weak kneed" educators (too often administrators) trying to keep students happy (and dumb).

(c) Better teachers and individualized teaching methods can help. I do not believe that there is "grade inflation." The mass media and an increase in background knowledge give us better students.

(d) Instructors are increasingly in competition to "hold" their students so they grade higher. Many more courses are now electives rather than required. So give A's and B's and keep em!

(e) Students are in college now who should not be there. The courses are "watered down" and grades are adjusted accordingly. The problem stems particularly from the fact that this is the T.V., audio-visual student not taught to read and write; thus hampering the learning process. Students evaluating instructors has also been an important factor in academic grade inflation.

(f) Academic grade inflation has been a serious matter since the mid-sixties. I believe this was brought on by the failure of administrators to take positive action during a period of civil unrest. Many professors were forced to maintain student appeal for job security reasons. Students evaluating instructors is another reason for academic grade inflation.

(g) Grade inflation comes from fear of losing one's teaching position. The static situation concerning the number of college students and the abandonment of the requirement that students have to take some hours of an instructor's specific discipline have caused many faculty members to fear for their jobs and to make it easier for students in order to make the course more popular. This is not good. As for student evaluations of instructors, they certainly have contributed to academic grade inflation. Student evaluations are a waste of time in most instances. They are trustworthy only in extreme cases of teacher incompetence.

(h) If academic grade inflation has occurred, it doesn't bother me. I find it worthwhile to stress a student's achievement so am not concerned with academic grade inflation. It is a bit difficult for graduate schools to evaluate products of academic grade inflation, but they always have the G.R.E. Student evaluations of instructors are good if the form tests teacher effectiveness rather than punctuality.

(i) I have not particularly seen it [academic grade inflation] at B.C.C., but one of the greatest forces encouraging it is the pernicious practice of students evaluating faculty by administrative edict.

(j) Academic grade inflation is definitely with us. This is greatly due to pressure on instructors by administrators who are primarily interested in swelling enrollments. Further, our present day society seems brain washed with the idea that everyone should have a college education. As a result, many community groups and politicians opportunistically push this false premise. It has been proven time and again that at least 90% of the students evaluate the instructor by how well they individually are doing in his (her) class. As a result, many instructors engage in popularity contests with their colleagues in order to obtain a high evaluation, with the detrimental outcome of reduced academic standards and the giving of inflated grades.

(k) The pressure of the administration on the teachers has caused it [academic grade inflation]. Also, idealistic educators who blame the teachers for a student's failure seldom realize that many students are at fault for their own failure. Finally, politics and public relations are involved: it doesn't look good if too many individuals fail or don't graduate. Sometimes it is the teachers' fault; they pass students to get them out of their classes or they sometimes are not good teachers in several respects.

(l) Yes, academic grade inflation has occurred. This fact is difficult on a teacher with professional standards and is unfair to the student who then thinks he is better prepared than he is.

(m) I am not familiar with the articles cited about academic grade inflation. I do think this has occurred. I attribute it largely to the mandate handed down to teachers not to fail students. Like many things, this too will pass.

(n) "Academic grade inflation" is a result of the emphasis on innovation in the field of education. It is also part of the idea that education should be "sold" to the new generations as a pleasant, agreeable activity instead of the old, stereotyped idea that the student should "suffer" to learn.

(o) I do not believe academic grade inflation has occurred. Some instructors have always done this, but they have been matched by teachers who have always graded too hard.

(p) I deplore the practice of academic grade inflation as I believe it gives a false sense of achievement to students who later find that they really have not mastered the skills necessary to function in society. One cause of this might be a sense of insecurity on the part of teachers who feel threatened when they do not attract sufficient numbers of students to satisfy administration requirements.

(q) I'm sure inflation of marks has occurred in recent years. Why, I'm not sure. I suspect that with the generous policy at many colleges today, potentially failing students drop out before they fail; thus the grades of those who remain seem to "inflate" the number of high ones. Between one half to one third of my beginning students drop out of every class from the first to the final drop day. Rarely does [illegible] failing student remain. In addition, many schools [illegible]r give failure or even "D's." In a period when te[illegible]bs are scarce, I suspect that a certain amount [illegible]d-guyism" is attempted by giving high marks. However, I have rarely seen an "easy marker" who was "liked" or respected.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)

(a) I think we have become less sure of our judgement, and in the absence of certainty it is better not to be too harsh. I think inflation is widespread; all values seem to be cheaper now.

(b) Yes, academic grade inflation has occurred. Why? A multiplicity of reasons. Effect? Nothing which in the future can't be quietly adjusted. Some students are floating around with exaggerated notions of their skills and abilities. Yes, academic grade inflation has occurred in recent years. It is caused by the so-called "success ratio;" that is, evaluation of an instructor's competence on the basis of the relative number of his students that make a grade of C or above. Student evaluations of faculty, when they are used by the administration as part of the annual evaluation process, also has contributed to grade inflation. Finally, changes in policies concerning when a student may drop a course before he is considered failing it has an influence. Students may now receive a withdrawal (W) grade, which is non-punitive, almost up to final exams.

(c) The quality of work for each grade has suffered, or slipped, because of pressures from administrators and charges of bigotry or "poor" community college spirit if the instructor fails a student. If all institutions would define "skills" with the same grade assignment (or academic standard), I could accept the new definition of grades or non-punitive grading. But an "A" by another name may be a "C".

(d) Yes, academic grade inflation has occurred on every academic level. It probably stems from ineffectual teaching of reading and writing skills in the public school system.

(e) Yes, academic grade inflation has occurred! This may be in part because of the emphasis on the success ratio of teachers (passing students compared with failing students). The open door has probably had some effect on grade inflation too--and student evaluations of instructors.

(f) Academic grade inflation is a definite problem; faculty members need to be loved and be popular; excessively liberal attitudes towards the underprivileged; also, student evaluations of teachers.

(g) Academic grade inflation has occurred partly because of the administration's playing with such things as "success ratio"; also due to the lack of backbone on the part of some faculty members. Also, the writings of "education" professors.

(h) Yes, there has been academic grade inflation in this school and, according to reports in any number of sources, is a national trend. Larger enrollments, administrative pressure, the late 1960's fear that "flunked" male students might end up dead in Vietnam are all possible causes; so are student evaluations of instructors.

(i) I am not at all certain that grade inflation has taken place. If it has, part of the reason may lie in the trend toward flexible grading systems and "performance contracting," which leave the instructor with considerably fewer clear-cut standards of performance. In the community college, with the wide range of student abilities, instructors may be inclined to lower overall standards to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared. I find that upper division universities I have attended generally have a higher performance standard today than when I did my undergraduate work. I believe "grade inflation" is probably able to be correlated directly with admission standards. Also, student evaluations of instructors, which tend to be more of popularity judgements than anything else, have helped to cause grade inflation.

(j) Yes, academic grade inflation has probably occurred, in part because of the continuing hang-up this society has about success and the "terrible unacceptability" of failing. Also, in large part because of the desire of schools to make a "good image" for themselves. Who wants failures? This is the feeling of most institutions and individuals. Grade inflation thrusts in our faces an unrealistic picture of estimated capability and true accomplishment, and it can only further serve to heap discredit on those groups and institutions which partake of its involvement.

(k) "Grade inflation" is certainly real, and it constitutes an injustice to both the student and to society. It is prompted, I suspect, by teachers intimidated by student evaluations, and by administrations eager to maintain full classrooms. The theories of "education specialists" have also had an effect.

(l) Grade inflation is to some extent a result of behavioral objectives, which have made measurable standards not as vague or complex, thus increasing the number of students who can reach them. Partly because our students are entering college more sophisticated and partly because cheating has become a science.

(m) There undoubtedly has been grade inflation in all collegiate institutions. The reasons may be less faith in the grading system on the instructor's part, as well as the necessity for high grades to enter advanced programs of various kinds. Some instructors are fearful that they may look bad if they give poor grades. The administration has pushed toward academic grade inflation in the community college.

(n) I suspect academic grade inflation has occurred to some extent. The faculty may feel some pressure to keep pass/fail ratios at an optimum level.

(o) Some possibilities of grade inflation are the open door policy; lowering of standards in the public schools; the difficulty that well-intentioned teachers in public schools have with large classes representing different ethnic, religious, language differences and levels of education; student evaluations of instructors; job security; the tendency to blend in and not "make waves" nor "rock the boat;" and finally, the feeling of both instructors and students that there has been a loss of individual identity. Academic grade inflation may also be caused by social pressures, the dropping out of poorer students and the loss of what one may consider as normal.

(p) Yes, academic grade inflation has taken place. There has been pressure to give the students a "successful" experience. This means giving better grades and "watering down" courses so "drops" are reduced. Student evaluations of instructors and writers in the field of education have also had an influence in academic grade inflation.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)

(a) Grades and grading methods have changed over the last ten years, but the changes are not all "inflation." In general education courses I believe the pressure on instructors is greatest. Students are not as well prepared, some courses are required, instructors have a fuzzy idea of what should be taught, and, most importantly, instruction has remained ineffective.

(b) I do not know very much about "grade inflation." Some has occurred on this campus because of pressure to retain students.

(c) I don't believe academic grade inflation has occurred in our department (except for one teacher) and really don't believe it's a problem yet at our school. However, our academic dean has expressed concern over the high withdrawal rate from courses, and some teachers have been brought to task. The real problem lies with students not possessing basic skills in reading, math and English; but our administration remains blind to this fact.

(d) I think I have noticed a trend toward "academic grade inflation," which may have occurred due to the "currying of favor" encouraged by student evaluation of teachers; also, because many students nowadays are more or less undisciplined, especially in the area of study, so tend to drop subjects when "pressed," or complain to the administration.

(e) Academic grade inflation has occurred. Students who cannot read and write as well as my eleven year old daughter--ones who are struggling in Remedial Reading and Writing, who have taken them and failed, are by-passing substantial college credit courses for easy ones. This has been possible because many previously "required" courses are no longer needed for the A.A. degree. This change has occurred because of administrative pressure as well as student pressure. Administrative "pressure" upon the faculty, equating student failure or withdrawal with "instructor failure." Also influential is the absence of placement in courses according to student achievement scores.

(f) I think the whole discussion about academic grade inflation is spurious. Cure: simply eliminate grades. The whole grading process, as a small part of the credentialing process, is so shot through with teacher subjectivity that it comes to little more than academic impedimenta. But such stuff will be around a long time, for grading is a major source of teacher power.

(g) Academic grade inflation is an undeniable fact. Teacher self-preservation and ultimate school self-preservation, is the main cause. I do not support student evaluation at all. While in theory it should be a useful and valuable guide, in practice it is unreliable--an influence on academic grade inflation.

(h) I think that some people feel that grade inflation has occurred because instructors are afraid of student evaluations. Others think that higher grades encourage students, and they may do better overall academically if they are given the boost of higher grades. I suppose that there is a little truth to both theories. However, who knows? Maybe it's a question of instructors really becoming interested in the students as well as the subject matter of their courses. So as a result, their assessment of student achievement is now more realistic than it need bo. Certain schools which are really anxious about the phenomenon of grade inflation have solved the problem by administering special tests which will somehow weed out those who managed to slip through. I suppose that such a practice is necessary in special fields.

(i) I suppose some instructors may grade higher than they used to, which is not the same as grading "higher than their work warrants." Many instructors take into account such realities as the changing nature of student populations (background, preparedness, interests, ambitions), the knowledge explosion, changing patterns of communication (TV, etc.), changing cultural patterns, employment, and rising aspirations of blacks and the disadvantaged. We all read less and listen and watch more.

(j) I do believe there has been "academic grade inflation" in the last few years and that it has been subtly encouraged by the administration, which has until this year impressed us with the need to attract and hold students. Numbers of "drops" have been noted for various classes by the Academic Dean. We have been led to understand this is a "student's market" and educators have been stressing the belief that all students are educable--the instructor has only to discover the particular method ("gimmick," "package") that will "turn him on." Furthermore, the very job of an instructor may depend on the number of students who sign up for his/her course. If the instructor has the reputation for being a "hard" grader, students will often take someone else's course.

Manatee Community College

(a) Grade inflation may be caused by far too many variables to attempt a listing. Perhaps a major one is the need of some instructors to relate to the youth movement. The recent rise of student rights and protests may also be a factor. Although I support student evaluation of instructors if they include a written section as well as objective responses, they do help to cause academic grade inflation.

(b) I do not know that academic grade inflation has occurred.

(c) I am not aware that academic grade inflation exists except through rumor. If it exists, I believe it is an attempt to gain popularity. A course may gain popularity as an easy mark, but the students laugh behind the instructor's back.

(d) Yes, I believe it has occurred and some of the reasons for it are instructor laziness, "nice-guy" syndrone; also as student motivation (helping low confidence students). But I see many dangers to the practice. The only danger that concerns me seriously is that of turning students loose on the world who really can't perform at the "minimum acceptable level" (whatever that may mean).

(e) I personally have not experienced grade inflation. The grading system seems to be very similar to 20 years ago. I do believe entering college students are better prepared, which could result in higher grades.

(f) Inflating grades in my opinion is academically destructive. A standard of excellence must be maintained. John Gardner said: "We must learn to honor excellence (demand it) in every socially acceptable human activity. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exaulted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy! Neither its pipes nor the theories will hold water."

(g) I believe that "academic grade inflation" is a fact and not a myth. To halt the inflation rate we must become more performance oriented.

(h) I do not believe that many instructors are guilty of academic grade inflation. Most instructors are aware that students who have been "given" grades feel cheated, and in the long run the instructor who inflates grades to win popularity defeats his purpose.

(i) With the U.S.A. trying to "higher educate" most of the "college age" people, this inflation is bound to happen. Yes, it has occurred--because our society has "degree mania" as a part of social acceptance.

Edison Community College

(a) Yes, I believe academic grade inflation is occurring. There are several variables involved here. I think the most significant one lies in the fact that so many of our students are inadequately prepared. So much pressure is put on instructors to keep the F.T.E. up and the attrition rate down that some instructors may yield to the temptation of lowering standards and inflating grades. Others may do so in order to be assured of classes that "make." I would hlpe that this is so in very vew cases, but I'm afraid that it does make a small contribution to the problem.

(b) One of the benefits of course outlines with specific behavioral objectives has been the elimination of much of the guessing game between students and teachers. When course requirements are spelled out and standards set to achieve specific grades, the student is more likely to achieve higher grades. This means higher achievement and not "academic grade inflation."

(c) I have not consciously engaged in the practice of "academic grade inflation;" however, I have unwillingly fallen into the procedure in recent years in making the transition from the old, subjective type of teaching to the new, more objective type. I had to establish new standards of grading based on new and unfamiliar behavioral patterns in student activity, and the result was a harrowing adjustment period during which I tried to be fair in rewarding the students appropriately for their efforts. I realize now that my "fairness" often became over-compensation, so that many high grades, mostly A's, were given without demanding complementing efforts by students. While I have largely abandoned my old "hell-curve" system of grading, I do not believe any grading system should suddenly reward students who produce little effort in the learning process.

(d) Yes, I believe academic grade inflation has occurred and in many respects I feel guilty. Some of the reasons are the desire of the instructors to use large classes as a sign of popularity--the instructor's feeling that high grades will cut down frustrations, thus decreasing unrest and riotous conditions on campus. There is also the feeling by faculty members that student evaluations are a threat to their job security. Therefore, they offer high grades as a bribe for outstanding evaluations. Finally, some faculty members offer high grades out of apathy. They are more willing to follow this line, than to keep up-to-date in their field of instruction. Regardless of the reason, this is unethical and really is another sign of moral bankruptcy.

(e) The literature and my own experience suggest that there has been "academic grade inflation." On the other hand, behavioral objectives, re-testing, and no failures--withdrawal instead, without penalty, have established a setting in which students who perform can get A's or B's, and if they want nothing lower can drop out. I believe that those who stick with it do learn more in relation to the established objectives. This may be regarded as a plus. On the other hand, I also believe that established objectives have been weighty factors.

(f) "Academic grade inflation" certainly has occurred in the last few years, particularly in the Florida system. The reasons are mostly political, since financing is becoming more and more dependent on the number of student successes. The community colleges at first were given the job of "cooling out" the poor students while insuring the American way of giving them the opportunity for success. Now, due to political pressures etc., the colleges are being pressured into producing more successes. Student evaluations of teachers are much to blame for academic grade inflation.

(g) Academic grade inflation may have occurred. Reasons: (1) printouts (publicized) of instructors and grades given; (2) faculty fearful of losing their positions if F.T.E. drops; (3) faculty reaction (fearful) of student evaluations; (4) upper institutions changing standards; (5) new type faculty.

(h) Yes, I believe "academic grade inflation" does exist in many colleges. One reason may be to attract students to a class in order to assure a proper number of students in the classroom.

Question 6

In recent years community colleges, in their effort to accommodate the disadvantaged and underprepared student, may have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little. Comment.

Responses

Broward Community College (Central Campus)

(a) Adjustments made in curriculum, instruction and in academic standards at my community college and probably at others have been too extensive. This is particularly true of academic standards. Too much consideration has been given to quantity or numbers of students and not nearly enough to quality and academic achievement.

(b) Students are in college now who should not be there. The courses are "watered down" and grades are adjusted accordingly. The problem partially stems from the fact that what we have is the "T.V., audio-visual student"--not taught to read and write, thus hampering the learning process.

(c) Not entirely. The instructional level must meet the needs of the students now in college. That means a reduction of the past higher levels as students' abilities have declined. Contemporary methods and teaching aids must be utilized to stimulate the students' learning process. Every possible system must be altered and regeared to match the incoming student. A new challenge greets education--to expand and to function not as a conservative institution but as one of communicating with students who need assistance. The classroom will no longer suffice for each and every student. Emphasis now must be placed on a closer teacher-student relationship if these new students are to be encouraged to continue in higher education. Study aids of all types and descriptions must be used. The lecture approach must be reoriented with more interesting discussions developed on a question and answer approach. Bend to meet the needs of the students or education will become a babysitting service even on the Junior College level.

(c) Education has become a business and success is now equated in numbers of students and not in quality of education. Students in the grammar schools are passed without mastering the three R's and almost 60% of so-called college students (especially at the community college level) are functional illiterates. I cannot imagine a worse educational system in the western world than that now in the U.S. We must turn back the clock and teach fundamentals, and hold students at a certain level of accomplishment. Innovation started in the 1940's and began the decline of education. and this fact can easily be established.

(d) It is a function of the community college to provide opportunity to people with a minimum of financial risk. This is fine as long as it does not result in the lowering of academic standards. The administration is pushing the notion of retaining as many students as possible in order to keep state financial support high. This results in the lowering of standards, which constitutes a fraud upon the student, taxpayer and the professional standards of the higher education profession.

(e) The community college has certainly gone too far in accommodation at the expense of cognitive learning. The student who expects to earn a university parallel A.A. degree should be required to take at least one year of English composition, two years of a foreign language, one year of history, etc. By giving the student the complete smorgasbord to pick from, he ends up with a hodge-podge of unrelated subjects, with no firm foundation in anything. It is human nature to want to choose the easy "rap" subjects like education, psychology, sociology, etc. and avoid the "hard content" courses--math, science, languages and history. If a student is not working for a degree, let him take what he damn well pleases--but, there should be some standardization of curriculum for degree students. Furthermore, the trend to offer exotic or esoteric courses at the community college level is ridiculous--how does one specialize before he has an overview of the whole field?

(f) I think that while some accommodation was necessary to get us out of the middle ages in education, the abolition of requirements in various areas (history, literature, foreign languages, etc.) threatens our social structure seriously and turns our schools into trade schools. The eventual result will be a poorly informed and dull citizenry.

(g) Accommodation and adjustment for the seriously underprepared students can realistically be made by providing reading and writing labs; also, perhaps a semester of non-credit preparatory work. Otherwise, remedial work could better be provided by high schools or other types of institutions. Using this plan would not lower standards.

(h) Really, I think the major adjustment is the S.P.A.N.S. Program (for the very underprepared). The 090 courses are, in my opinion, a further insult to the underprepared student who has been overcrowded and overlooked for twelve years of public education. The standardized program of 095 English (for the underprepared) has little if anything to do with meeting individual student's needs.

(i) I feel that some of the adjustments in curriculum for "new" students (whom I define as culturally deprived) are excellent. However, any lowering of academic standards I find deplorable. The goals of the community college seem to differ now from what they were ten years ago; i.e., the criteria being post high school age regardless of whether the student wants professional, academic, technical, or enrichment courses.

Miami-Dade Community College (South Campus)

(a) I think in my community college we are doing less and less to accommodate the student who is underprepared in reading and writing. We do not have remedial composition as such. In mathematics, science, accounting, and typing we accommodate the student quite well by giving him varying levels upon which he may begin.

(b) It seems like they are giving education away. Standards are almost non-existent. They believe anyone is capable of being a scholar. Reading and writing labs seem a necessary evil--but worthwhile. The admission of so many unprepared students is threatening to academic standards.

(c) The "I" Division (for the seriously underprepared) is an example that comes to mind, and from information volunteered by its students, I question its effectiveness.

(d) The "I" Division, which "spoon-feeds" and partially teaches disadvantaged students "accommodates" too much. This could be useful as a remedial measure on a non-credit basis. I do believe that the present system is destructive of academic standards.

(e) The "I" Division does this. Reading and writing labs are used. These attempt to up-grade poor students and have failed and academic standards have suffered thanks to our public schools' efforts to send in very large numbers of poor students.

(f) Underprepared students are admitted and dealt with in many different ways in hopes of developing their skills and achievements. However, when they are placed in large numbers in a classroom with "prepared" students, the tendency is to lower the language and achievement levels and the objectives of the course.

(g) We have a special division designed for maximum personal attention and individual "contract" approaches to learning, which is supposed to accommodate the special students, especially the underprepared. However, it does not reach all the underprepared, and its courses simply require less work of the students involved. This is not equivalent work over extended periods of time, and not integrating remedial teaching. We also have reading and writing labs, which can be taken for credit or used as tutorial services. Again, one cannot require the student to avail himself of these services, and in the advisement process test scores and transcripts are often not available so that the student can be channeled where he belongs.

(h) We have remedial classes and a liberal drop policy. Yes, our policies have emphasized accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

(i) Underprepared students are encouraged to register for remedial course instruction and to complete certain minimum requirements before moving on to higher levels. Foreign language students, barring a problem with comprehending English, are encouraged to enter into specially designated foreign language sections of basic studies courses. I believe such procedures have been useful and proper and do not tend to threaten academic standards or goals.

(j) The underprepared student has the choice of being frustrated in regular classes or coddled in the "I" Division ("I" for Intercurricula). Human relations should be supplemented with cognitive content. The Learning Support System (tutorial labs in reading and writing) needs to be funded and used. Basic, minimum standards for composition should be set and tested. It is unfair for the teacher of the sequential required course to accept inadequately prepared students. College credit should be granted only when the students meet the proper skill levels.

(k) "I" Division for the very underprepared students includes "watered down" facts and skills learning. Labs--writing and reading; excellent under the circumstances.

(l) Preparatory or lower level courses--without college transfer credit--are the main means for handling the problem. The program has had relatively little effect overall. In general, academic standards are under attack from many other areas as well.

(m) We have the Learning Support Center and the "I" Division. They seem to work well for the motivated student but poorly for the one who is not. There does seem to be a lowering of academic standards.

(n) We have remedial clinics which are a fine idea. We also have special sections of courses designed to include a strictly homogeneous population of students, such as the disadvantaged, P.E. majors, etc. The latter idea defeats the purpose.

St. Petersburg Community College (Clearwater Campus)

(a) We have had a program of Directed Studies for remedial work, but this will be cut back severely in the future. I don't know what plans are being made for the underprepared student next year. Directed Studies would have been more useful if they had not been strictly voluntary. Often the student who needed it did not sign up for it.

(b) We have only "Directed Studies"--courses in English, math and reading, but not enough students use them. We need diagnostic testing and mandatory courses for those students deficient in basic skills. I do not think we have stressed accommodation too much and cognitive learning too little.

(c) Self-paced courses in fundamentals are offered in composition, reading and mathematics. A special block program is for especially poor students. It is unsuccessful on this campus, but very successful on the other campus /St. Petersburg/. These adjustments do not threaten standards since they precede the standard courses.

(d) Three courses, one in math and two in English, are offered for underprepared students. Some other courses, very few, offer individualized study which makes allowances for such students. More remedial courses and improved instruction are both desirable and proper. I don't have a high opinion of "academic standards" as the term is generally used.

(e) The major adjustment, up to this time, has been Directed Studies, designed to help prepare some student for regular course work. Next year, however, this will be abandoned and the remediation (preparation) will become a function of the regular class. Under these conditions it will be essential to have time adjustments available. I believe that attending regular classes can be more profitable for these students than a special department--if the instructor helps it happen.

(f) Directed Studies was purposely set up to assist underprepared students, such as we often get with "open-door" admission. Undoubtedly these courses have been helpful, but many students resent the "stigma" of being placed in such courses, no matter how great their need. The college is now planning, I understand, to incorporate directed studies in each department as a source of help to regular teachers with problem students.

(g) Remedial courses are offered. Also, a special program for the "culturally deprived" exists. Further, off campus study centers are sponsored and funded. The on-campus offerings seem useful and proper; the off-campus offering seems proper in theory--not in practice, and of questionable value. Under a regular "semester system" the academic standards are threatened, not by remediation programs but by non-compulsory enrollment in them. In short, Academic Excellence hinges upon the "open-door policy" being complemented by course offerings appropriate to students' academic ability levels, and implemented in terms of appropriate student placement in courses according to student level of ability.

(h) Our college has centered its work for the "unprepared" student in two areas: "Directed Studies" courses in English and math and total opportunity program--one mostly directed at the underprepared black student. Both have been of minor value. The best system is that of the student working with a teacher-manager starting where the student is and carrying him on. These adjustments do not "threaten" goals and standards--they support them!

(i) A great deal of adjustment has been made as most students are completely "unprepared"--not just "underprepared." For college level work in humanities, my area, the level, consequently, is lower and progress is slower as a result of these adjustments.

(j) We have had the TOPS program at S.P.J.C. for three years, but I believe it is being phased out. We have had Directed Studies for at least six years, but it too is being phased out. It will become part of the Communications Division where the English courses are involved. With the use of individualized courses the underprepared student does not feel the stigma of being in a special class, but finds encouragement by enjoying a more personalized program which fits his needs and abilities--yet stimulates his optimal progress. I do not feel that competency-based, criterion referenced tests are a threat to academic standards. I see them as a modification to a system that has remained too long unchanged and unaware of the potential of the students.

Manatee Community College

(a) I feel that remedial and tutorial programs (and teacher committment to the individuality of the student) are useful and proper. As to threatening academic standards, I have formed no definite opinion.

(b) We require a program of "Guided Studies" for all students who score below 150 on the Florida 12th Grade Exam. Four courses must be completed with a satisfactory grade. These courses are English composition, reading skills, developmental math and study skills. There is no threat to academic standards as a result of this program; but I rarely see or hear about these students "succeeding" or ever taking regular courses after they complete the program.

(c) Our college has developed a remedial program to accommodate the underprepared student. I believe the idea is good, but many students see it as a punishment. I think that two of the courses in the program should remain ("Reading" and "Psychology"--how to study, etc.) but the remaining two should be dropped. Instead, students should take designated sections of regular English and math. If they don't finish these in one term, they should be allowed to continue where they left off. I do not think remedial courses threaten the academic standards of the college, but I rarely hear about any successes which have been achieved. I never seem to get the "products" of these classes in any of my classes.

(d) The students with learning problems are assigned to remedial classes in math, English, and personal psychology. These classes may serve a useful purpose, but their efficiency rating is very low. I do not believe they are a threat to the academic standards of the college.

(e) My institution pays lip service to the community college philosophy. Each student should have a means to start from where he is, and have the opportunity to get to where he wants to go. To me this says individualized instruction, learning resource center and qualified personnel. None of these are available to any great extent at this institution. The disadvantaged student remains disadvantaged.

Edison Community College

(a) Underprepared students have been organized into special classes for special instruction designed to remedy their deficiencies or problems in socialization, reading, writing and mathematics. They have been actively sought out, recruited and subsidized. All of these operations erode academic standards and the quality of education being delivered in higher education. If the rationale for such activity is valid--and I believe it is--then the remedial instruction should be carried out in the county school system.

(b) Special programs, classes, etc. are offered for the seriously underprepared. Some are useful and proper and others threaten academic goals.

(c) We have courses in reading, pre-college level math, writing etc. for the students who are deficient in these areas. We also have a program for the educationally disadvantaged (mostly black) who come to our campus and take some of the required courses in classes which are small, more intimate, and where the material is carefully chosen for their level. These are useful and proper, though I feel it is questionable practice to give full college credit for these courses, since they are not the same courses given to the rest of the student body.

(d) Underprepared students make up a great percentage of our Special Services Program; we also find far too many other students underprepared in English. The institution's policy is opposed to basic programs, and thus many students who are really not minimally prepared are passed. As now followed, such a policy does not even prepare "the great American average student." In my opinion we must be academically honest with our students, and if they need basic skills, they should be taught as such--without regular college credit.

(e) My knowledge of adjustments to accommodate the underprepared student at my community college is based mainly on hearsy and intermittent sources and bits of information. There have been, as I understand it, a few skills courses offered in the past, and some now, in which instruction was given but no credit was offered. Recently, however, special courses are being offered to special students--the disadvantaged and blacks and others--in which credit is given even though the standards have been set lower than for the average college student. I do not believe this is fair to anyone--not to the disadvantaged student, who may be led to believe he is achieving more than he is, nor to the average student, who may think his own efforts are not being rewarded sufficiently in comparison with the special students. I think there is some necessity for training the disadvantaged student, but only in remedial, non-credit courses. And yes, I do think strongly that permissive adjustments and sops to the disadvantaged students threaten academic standards.

(f) A very great deal of effort has been made to recruit, provide financial support and to inform the community of opportunities for the underprepared student. Special classes are set up for remedial work in some areas. Very personally, I feel that far too much effort has been put into acquiring "bodies" and far too little effort has gone into meeting the very real needs of underprepared students. Their greatest deficiencies are in verbal skills. In my opinion these students should be retained in remedial programs in reading, composition and math until such time as they can demonstrate the level of proficiency that reflects an "earned" high school diploma. In our area, unfortunately, it is possible for a "student?" to acquire a high school diploma despite the fact that he/she can't read or write or spell beyond the 3rd or 4th grade level. Consequently, many of our regular students experience cultural shock if they are expected to write a paragraph.

Since I am one of the few surviving members of the endangered species of college instructors who give essay tests, I'm acutely aware of how poorly prepared the local students are for college level studies. We need not only to provide but to insist upon far greater opportunities for the students who are labeled as disadvantaged. They are admitted to regular college credit classes long before they are adequately prepared. Then many instructors, in order not to be criticized for failing students, "pass" the non-achieving students. The extent to which this presents a threat to academic standards and goals lies with the individual instructor, who far too often goes along with academic grade inflation. I believe far more should be done for the bright and achieving student than is done; most of the effort is for the underprepared. But it is the good students who come back to express appreciation and return to the community to utilize their various talents and enrich the local scene.

Autobiographical Sketch

Chester Handleman was graduated in 1941 from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts with an A.B. degree. After serving for more than three years in the United States Army, much of which was in combat areas in the Pacific area during World War II, he was honorably discharged in October, 1945. He then worked for the federal government and followed this by three years in family business.

He taught Social Studies and English on the secondary school level in Massachusetts from 1949-1957. He received the Ed.M. degree from Massachusetts State College in 1951 and the Sixth Year Professional Diploma in Education in 1957 from the University of Connecticut. In 1961 he received the A.M. degree from Clark University (History and Government). He did further graduate work in History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1970-1972). In July of 1975 he was awarded a certificate from Georgetown University's Center for Personalized Instruction for successful completion of the Workshop on the Personalized System of Instruction, conducted by its Center For Personalized Instruction.

Chester Handleman is presently (since 1961) a faculty member in History and Political Science at Broward Community College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. At Broward he is (since 1967) Faculty sponsor for Phi Theta Kappa, the Junior College National Scholastic Honors Society. He is presently Secretary of the Faculty Senate and is Secretary-Elect of the Faculty for the year 1975-1976. He is also a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the President of the College, and has recently been nominated to serve on the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee to review the college curriculum. He is also an active member of the Broward Community College Speakers' Bureau, representing the college at local clubs, condominiums and other organizations on an average of once a month. His topics are usually in the areas of international relations and national politics.

Two of Chester Handleman's articles appear in summary form in the March and May (1975) issues of ERIC, The Junior College Clearinghouse. One of his articles in the field of education appears in the Improving College and University Teaching Yearbook (1975), published by the Oregon State University Press. Another article in the field of education appears in summary form in the Winter issue of the Community College Social Science Quarterly (Winter, 1975). He has presented professional papers at the Florida Conference of College Teachers of History (1968); at the Community College Social Science Convention (1973, 1974); and at the Florida Political Science Association Annual Meeting (1975).

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